



Jim Mason, scout

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JIM MASON, SCOUT

ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR

By ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR

JIM MASON, BACKWOODSMAN

JIM MASON, SCOUT

CAPTAIN JIM MASON

MASON AND HIS RANGERS

THREE WILDERNESS SCOUTS

Western Indian Series

WHITE OTTER

THE WAR TRAIL

THREE SIOUX SCOUTS

THE MEDICINE BUFFALO

THE WAR CHIEF

THE SPOTTED PONY

Eastern Indian Series

SPOTTED DEER

RUNNING FOX

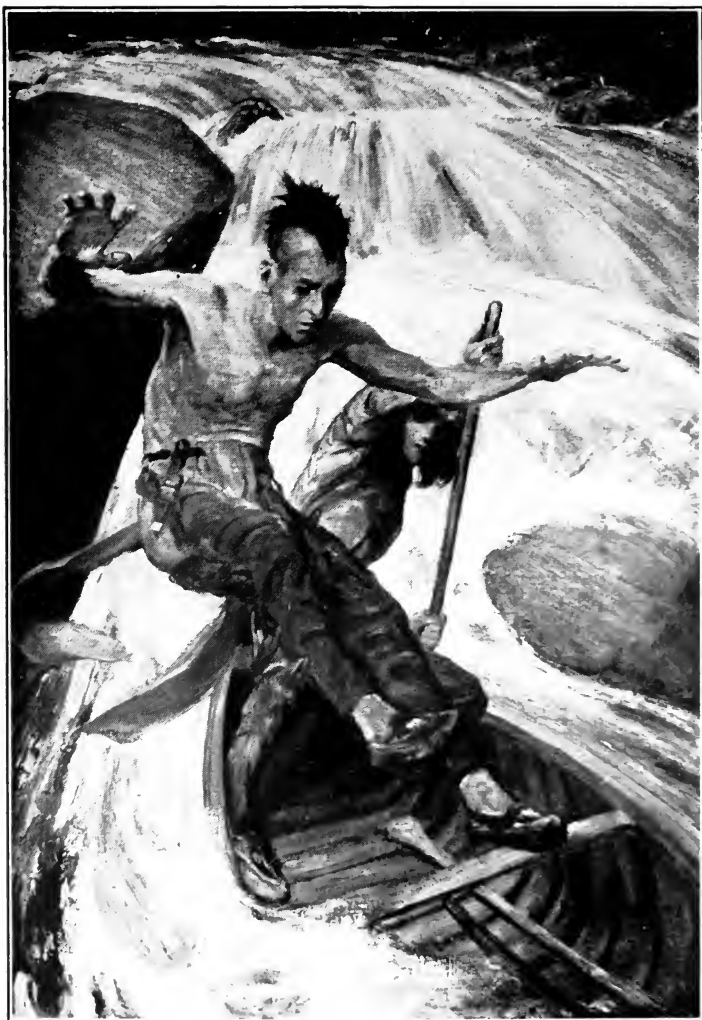
THE WHITE WOLF

THE WAR EAGLE

THE MYSTERY TRAIL

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RICHKINET JUMPED, AND LANDED IN THE BOW.

JIM MASON, SCOUT

BY
ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR

AUTHOR OF "JIM MASON, BACKWOODSMAN,"
"SPOTTED DEER," "THE WHITE WOLF," ETC.



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JIM MASON, SCOUT

ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR



JIM MASON, SCOUT

CHAPTER I

THE RAPIDS

HAVING passed the winter with the Mohawks at Caughnawaga, Jim Mason, a young trader, and his friend Kichkinet, a young Mohawk warrior, were returning to Fort Johnson with a consignment of furs. Aided by Colonel William Johnson, Jim had begun his career as a trader the previous year. At that time he had been commissioned by Colonel Johnson to overcome the influence of Pierre La Valle, a wily half-breed, in the employ of the French who were attempting to win the Mohawks from the English. After many exciting adventures Jim finally exposed the treachery of La Valle, and left him a prisoner in the hands of the infuriated Mohawks who had condemned him to death. However, while Jim was absent on a visit to Fort Johnson, La Valle and his confederate, a white rogue named Stockley, succeeded

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in making a mysterious escape from the Mohawk camp. The circumstances led Jim to suspect old Da-yo-ho-go, a crafty Mohawk Medicine Man. The latter was a staunch defender of La Valle, and an implacable foe of the English colonists. Jim, however, was careful to conceal his suspicions from Kichkinet, for the young Mohawk, like all his people, regarded the old Medicine Man with superstitious awe and respect. Jim determined, therefore, to say little about the escape until he reached the settlement and told his story to Colonel Johnson.

The lads made a striking appearance as they paddled rapidly along the river which had received its name from the powerful Mohawks, who had located their villages along its winding course. Seated in the stern of the bark canoe, Jim was a splendid specimen of the young frontiersman. He was tall and robust, with dark eyes and long black hair that fell loosely about his shoulders. He wore a coonskin cap, and was dressed in buckskins. A long-barreled flint-lock rifle lay within easy reach in the bottom of the canoe. Kichkinet, who sat in the opposite end of the canoe, was a typical young Mohawk warrior. His head was shaved, except a narrow crest of hair which extended back

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from the center of his forehead and terminated in a scalp-lock on his crown. He was bare above the waist, but his limbs were clothed in buckskin breeches. His bow and quiver were close beside him.

The day was two-thirds gone, and Jim and his companion expected to reach Fort Johnson before dark. The river was high and rapid from the spring freshets, and the little bark canoe floated swiftly with the water. They were approaching a spot which filled Jim with sad memories. It was a long, rock-strewn stretch of swift water in which his father had been drowned two years before. At sunset they came in sight of it. Jim immediately turned the canoe toward shore. They disembarked, and dragged the canoe from the water. Then they took stout rawhide thongs and bound the bundle of furs, and their blankets and weapons, to the braces that extended across the center of the canoe.

Having taken the usual precautions, they launched the canoe and paddled toward the rapids. When they were within bowshot Jim rose and carefully studied the long stretch of tossing whitecaps. There was an ominous challenge in the sullen roar of the river, and Jim's face grew dark and serious at the sound.

"It is the home of the Water Monsters," declared the superstitious young Mohawk.

"It is the place where my father died," Jim replied, soberly.

Kichkinet nodded.

A few moments afterwards they approached the head of the rapids. Jim exchanged the paddle for a long iron-shod pole. He had passed through many similar places, and his experienced eye soon selected the proper course.

"Hold straight ahead," he said.

The Mohawk nodded.

Then they entered the rapids, and the canoe plunged forward on the perilous dash down the treacherous rocky course. Once in the grip of the waters there was little to do but steer. Jim braced his feet and took a firm grip on the guiding pole. Kichkinet watched the swirling water, and held his paddle ready to prevent a crash against submerged bowlders. They were the great peril. It was comparatively easy to avoid the rocks which rose above the water, but there was constant danger of striking unseen bowlders that lay hidden beneath the surface of the river. Many of them were betrayed by the white water that boiled about them, and Jim was quick to heed such warnings. There were others, however, that lurked beneath smooth,

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gliding billows, and it was those which were the most treacherous. The canoe had reached the center of the rapids and was sweeping forward at tremendous speed, when Jim suddenly discovered one of the pitfalls directly ahead of him.

"Turn out, turn out!" he cried, excitedly.

Kichkinet made a desperate attempt to avoid the danger, but his efforts were useless. The canoe was driven broadside against the submerged boulder. The frail craft careened far over on one side, and Kichkinet lost his balance and toppled out. Jim dropped to his knees and grabbed wildly at the Mohawk, but Kichkinet sank as the canoe flashed past him. Jim glanced back and saw him clinging to a large rock that rose some distance above the water. For the moment he appeared to be safe, and Jim gave attention to the canoe. The weight of the furs kept it on an even keel. Then Jim again looked back and saw that Kichkinet had climbed upon the rock, beyond reach of the water. Jim felt somewhat relieved. A few moments later he passed safely from the rapids, and paddled to the shore.

"Here is a bad fix," Jim told himself.

Although Kichkinet appeared to be in no immediate peril, Jim realized that it would be dif-

ficult to rescue him from his predicament. There seemed but one thing to do, and that was to unload the canoe and carry it back to the head of the rapids. Jim untied and lifted out the furs and other things. Then he arranged the paddles so that he might carry the canoe. He raised it, and started away through the woods. There was no trail on that side of the river, and the uneven rocky ground was covered with an exasperating tangle of undergrowth. It was impossible to move swiftly, and Jim raged at the delay. He feared that Kichkinet might make a rash attempt to swim to land before he reached him. The thought startled him, for he knew that in such an inferno of water the strongest swimmer would be powerless. In fact it seemed miraculous that Kichkinet had been able to save himself by grasping the boulder that had threatened him with destruction.

“He knows I will go back—he will wait,” Jim assured himself.

As he hurried wildly through the undergrowth he kept a sharp watch for the rock upon which the Mohawk had taken refuge. It seemed a great distance back. At last he saw what appeared to be the boulder upon which he had last seen Kichkinet. Jim groaned

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as he noted that the rock was bare. What had become of the Mohawk? Jim feared to guess. He lowered the canoe from his shoulders, and looked upon the wild tumult of waters with gloomy misgivings. Escape seemed impossible. A bowshot below the rock a great black whirlpool appeared to lead down into the depths of the rapids. Jim shuddered as he watched it. Had Kichkinet been drawn into the death-trap? At that moment Jim discovered something turning swiftly about in the center of the boiling pool. His heart filled with sickening fear as he rushed to the edge of the water, and stared with wild, frightened eyes. A moment afterward he recognized the object as a log, and he murmured thankfully. Almost afraid to watch the seething black pool, he turned his eyes up the river. His heart bounded with joy as he saw the Mohawk still clinging to the boulder which was some distance farther on.

Raising the canoe, Jim rushed frantically through the woods until he was opposite Kichkinet. Then he lowered his burden and made his way to the edge of the forest. The Mohawk saw him and waved his hand. Jim began to shout.

"I will come down to you in the canoe," he cried.

His voice was overcome by the roar of the rapids, and he realized that it was useless to attempt to make Kichkinet understand. For a moment he was at a loss to know what to do. Then he carried the canoe to the edge of the water. He pointed at it, and then pointed up the river. Then he made motions to indicate the passage through the rapids. He pointed toward Kichkinet, and then pretended to jump into the canoe. Kichkinet appeared to be shouting, but Jim could not hear him. He touched his ears and shook his head. Then he repeated the signals. The Mohawk nodded his head. It was evident that he understood.

“Good,” cried Jim.

He carried the canoe some distance beyond the head of the rapids, and seated himself to rest from his exertions. He planned to run the rapids and approach near enough to the boulder to enable the active young Mohawk to jump into the canoe as it swept by him. Jim realized that it was a desperate, perilous undertaking in which the slightest miscalculation might mean death for both of them. However, he also knew that it offered the only chance to save Kichkinet, and Jim had sufficient confidence in himself to make the attempt.

“I’ll pull through,” he said.

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He rose, and placed several rocks in the center of the canoe to serve as ballast. Then he spent some moments staring defiantly at the threatening stretch of water in which he was about to risk his life. The roar of the river reverberated in his ears like the low angry snarl of a wild beast that had scented its prey. It was the same challenge which his father had heard—and accepted. Jim grew sober at the thought. Would he, too, go to his death in the depths of those raging rapids? Kichkinet had called it the home of the dreadful Water Monsters. The superstitious Mohawks believed that powerful demons lurked down there beneath the rushing waters to catch and destroy any one unfortunate enough to fall into the trap. For an instant the crude Indian superstition fastened upon Jim, but he laughed it away.

“I have beaten you once, and I shall beat you again,” he said.

He seated himself in the stern of the canoe, and paddled boldly toward the rapids. Before he reached the swift water he rose and carefully noted the course that would take him within leaping distance of Kichkinet. There were several treacherous places to be avoided, and Jim fixed them in his mind. Then he sent the

little canoe forward into the clutches of the torrent. A moment afterward he was swept away in the rush of water. Standing in the stern of the tossing canoe, Jim guided it down the perilous lane of white-crested billows with rare skill. Kichkinet saw him approaching, and stood upright upon the top of the boulder. Jim kept his eyes upon him. Several foaming eddies warned of hidden rocks, and one in particular threatened him with disaster. It was less than two bowlengths from the boulder upon which the Mohawk stood, and Jim saw that it would be necessary to guide the canoe between the obstructions. It was a task that required a calm head and a calculating eye. Jim turned the canoe toward the narrow channel of open water, and shouted a warning to Kichkinet.

“Get ready!” he cried.

The Mohawk had already crouched for his perilous leap. The fateful moment was at hand. Jim braced himself, and swerved the canoe straight toward the glistening black boulder that sheltered the Mohawk. When he was almost upon it, a dexterous twist of his sinewy arms drove the long pole deep into the water and the canoe sped past within handwidth of the boulder. Kichkinet jumped and landed in the

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bow. The shock caused the canoe to careen dangerously, and the Mohawk tottered and seemed about to plunge headlong into the water. He dropped to his knees and saved himself as a white-topped wave swept over the side. Jim was doing his utmost to keep the canoe on an even keel. It sank low beneath its load, and the waves were spashing into it. Jim feared that it would fill and sink before they reached the end of the rapids. Kichkinet, too, saw the peril, and turned to lift out the rocks which Jim had used for ballast.

“No, no!” warned Jim.

He feared that the effort would tip the canoe and cause it to fill. There was nothing to do except hold the little craft on an even keel until they gained quieter water. Warned by Jim, Kichkinet sat quietly in his place while the canoe sped on its course. Jim had avoided several bowlders that for a moment threatened trouble, and then he suddenly saw the black, swirling water of the whirlpool ahead of him. It was directly in his path. Kichkinet called a warning, and struck deep into the water with his paddle. Jim threw his weight against the steering pole. The bow of the canoe veered sharply, but the wild rush of water swept them forward before they could avoid the peril.

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They saw the black, foam-flecked waters of the death trap beneath the canoe. They had been caught in the edge of the whirlpool.

"Paddle, paddle!" shouted Jim.

He had dropped to his knees, and seized the paddle. Then, as the canoe begun to turn in the perilous circle, they fought furiously to escape from the trap. A great, wide-mouthed funnel led down into the gloomy depths of the pool, and Jim realized that once drawn into it there would be no chance for escape.

"Harder; paddle harder!" he cried.

Their exertions kept the canoe at the edge of the whirlpool, and they completed the circle without mishap. Then they redoubled their efforts to escape into the swift water. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, they forced the bow around until they finally freed it from the grip of the whirlpool. Then the canoe suddenly swept ahead, and the danger had passed.

"That was a close call," Jim declared, solemnly.

"It was the Water Monsters," Kichkinet told him.

They passed through the remaining stretch of swift water, and brought the canoe to shore at the spot where Jim had left the cargo. It was some time before they spoke. They spent

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many moments looking back at the rapids. Jim suddenly understood the peril which his father had faced each spring as he returned from his trading expeditions among the Mohawks. At last a slight error of judgment or some unforeseen accident had sent him to his death. Jim turned sadly away. At that moment Kichkinet came to him with outstretched hand.

"Achawi, you saved my life," he said. "You are very brave."

"I wish there had been some one to save my father," Jim replied, regretfully.

The long twilight shadows were already falling, and the day was at an end. They repacked the canoe, and resumed their journey down the river.

"Kichkinet, what are those great Water Monsters your people tell about?" Jim asked, suddenly.

"They are very mysterious," declared the Mohawk. "Some time I will tell you about them."

CHAPTER II

JIM REJOINS OLD FRIENDS

DUSK had already fallen when Jim and his companion finally drew near Fort Johnson. As they passed the first log house on the border of the settlement they were hailed by a man who had come to the edge of the river to watch them.

"Hello, there!" he shouted. "What news from up river?"

"All is quiet and peaceable," replied Jim.

The man nodded, and turned to join a woman and several children who had appeared in the doorway. It was evident that the hardy pioneers who had settled beyond the protection of the fort were in constant fear of a raid from the French and their Indians.

"Achawi, your friends are afraid of my people—they do not trust them," Kichkinet said, sadly.

"No, Mohawk, they are not afraid of your people," Jim assured him. "It is the French and their Indians whom they fear."

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They passed other houses, and at most of them the question was repeated. The people of the settlement appeared to be suspicious, and fearful of a sudden attack. Jim wondered what had aroused their anxiety.

"Perhaps the French are moving down into our country," he told Kichkinet.

"My people would know about it," the Mohawk told him.

"That is true," agreed Jim.

Soon afterward they approached the high log stockade that protected Fort Johnson. They smelled smoke and saw the glow from the evening fires. A company of men had come through the gate of the stockade, and were waiting near the water. Jim recognized several friends in the group. Among them was Dan Holcombe, a veteran woodsman and scout, whom Jim held in high esteem. He was the first to offer greetings as Jim stepped from the canoe.

"Jim, I'm powerful glad to see you," said Holcombe.

"Hello, Dan! I am just as glad to see you," replied Jim.

"How are things at Caughnawaga?"

"I have something to tell you—later," Jim said, softly.

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Kichkinet moved away to join several of his tribesmen who were waiting near the gate of the stockade, but Jim recalled him.

"Don't talk about Tor-yoh-ne until I see Colonel Johnson," Jim cautioned him.

Kichkinet nodded.

"Well, lad, you're just in time; we were about to eat when we heard you were comin' down the river," Holcombe told him.

"I'm as hungry as a bear," laughed Jim.

"Then follow me," said Holcombe.

"I must report to Colonel Johnson," Jim told him.

"That's the idee," agreed the scout. "Business first. You'll find the Colonel at the fort."

"I shall see you later," said Jim. "Save something for me, and tell the boys I will show them how to eat."

"Yes, yes," laughed Holcombe.

They passed through the gate of the stockade, and Jim went directly to the fort. It was a long, two-storied building with portholes. A sentry challenged him at the doorway.

"Jim Mason from Caughnawaga, and I wish to see Colonel Johnson," said Jim.

"The Colonel is engaged in an important council," the sentinel told him.

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"Then please inform him that I shall await his pleasure," said Jim.

"Very good," replied the militiaman.

Jim left the fort and returned to the river. He found Kichkinet and two other Mohawks sitting beside the canoe.

"Kichkinet, we will carry these furs to the trading store, and then we will look about for something to eat."

They lifted the bundle of furs from the canoe and made their way to the trading store. It was kept by Alexander MacCullough, a Scotchman. He gave Jim a hearty welcome.

"Well, well, a real good lot of furs," he said. "James Mason, you are a worthy successor to your father."

"Thank you," said Jim. "With your permission I shall leave these furs here until the morrow. Then I will come in and talk with you."

"Good enough," declared MacCullough.

"Now, Mohawk, we will scout around and look up some food," said Jim.

They made their way toward a fire where most of the men at the fort were assembled. Jim received an enthusiastic greeting. He and Kichkinet helped themselves to food, and sat beside Dan Holcombe. The latter was a tall,

rawboned man of about sixty years whose tanned face showed evidence of long exposure to wind and sun. Like most of the scouts and traders, he was dressed in buckskins. The previous year he had rendered valuable assistance to Jim in exposing La Valle, the treacherous French half-breed, whom the Mohawks knew as Tor-yoh-ne, The Wolf.

Most of the men about the fire had finished eating, and the usual round of songs and stories quickly followed the meal. Jim was asked all sorts of questions about the Mohawks and their attitude toward the colonists.

"Mason, do you really believe the Mohawks will join us against the French?" inquired a young militiaman.

"I am certain of it," Jim assured him. "They have given us the covenant chain of wampum, and they have promised to keep it bright. I feel sure they will keep their pledge."

"Well, perhaps with La Valle out of the way, we can trust them," the militiaman said, doubtfully.

Kichkinet turned to him with angry, flashing eyes.

"Your words are bad," he said. "I have heard many of your people talk like that. You

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ask us to be your friends, but you do not trust us. It is bad. Do you speak those words to your white brothers? No! You keep those words for the Mohawks. You tell my people that you are their friends. They believe you. Then they come to your village and you talk against them. It is foolish. It will make trouble."

"Now you see how they are," the militiaman cried, triumphantly. "It only takes a word to set them off."

"You speak impulsively," Jim said, calmly. "Your words are both illy chosen and unjustified. I shall not argue with you. If you really are suspicious of these people, it is because prejudice has influenced your judgment and closed your eyes to the truth. A few of us are attempting to sweep away the barriers that have prevented a better understanding between the white man and the Indian. It is such men as you who weaken and obstruct our efforts. My friend Kichkinet is justified in defending his people against your thoughtless insinuations. He has done much to help us, and at the present moment I do not believe there is one among us who has rendered more valuable service to the colony."

"Mason, you are a trader, and I realize that

it is profitable for you to hold the good will of the Mohawks," replied the militiaman.

"Do not attempt to judge my motives," Jim said, warmly. "I speak as a friend of the Mohawks and a loyal member of the colony, and what I do and say is without thought of personal gain. Had you been with me in the Mohawk camp, and seen the wily efforts of the French to win the Mohawks from us, perhaps you would understand the nature of the peril which has been averted. Then I believe you would have a better opinion of the Mohawks, and your words would be more friendly."

It was evident that Jim's talk found favor with the company about the fire, and the young militiaman subsided into silence. Kichkinet rose and went to join his tribesmen, and soon afterward Jim and Dan Holcombe took their departure.

"That young rooster talks too much," declared Holcombe.

"Dan, it is the same old story," said Jim. "The average white man will not and cannot understand the Indian. The Indian is tolerated only so long as it is profitable to tolerate him. When friendship interferes with ambition and greed he is made the victim of suspicion and prejudice, and is persecuted as a

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nuisance and a menace. Dan, it is wrong, absolutely wrong."

"I know it, lad," agreed Holcombe.

They had reached the barracks or headquarters for the men at the fort. It was a square stone building containing a large assembly room, and a storeroom above. Two tiers of bunks were arranged along the walls of the living room, which had a large stone fireplace at one end. A long log bench extended down the center of the room. Jim deposited his belongings in an unoccupied bunk. Then he seated himself beside Holcombe on the log bench.

"Well, Jim, you've been away since before the first frost; does it seem good to be back among white folks?"

"Yes, Dan, I am glad to be here," said Jim. "In a day or so I expect to go down to Schenectady to see my friends."

It was his birthplace, and Jim looked forward to the visit with eager anticipation. More than a year had passed since he had left his foster parents, a Scotch clergyman and his wife, who had cared for him since infancy, and he was eager to tell them of his success as a trader. Besides, he wished to share the proceeds of his trading ventures with them, but he feared that they would refuse the gift.

"Have you talked with Colonel Johnson?" Holcombe inquired, curiously.

"No," Jim told him. "I called at the fort but Colonel Johnson was engaged in a council. I left word of my arrival."

"Then I'll not ask anything about Caughnawaga," said Holcombe. "I've an idea you have something to tell me, but it's right and proper to report to the Colonel before you talk with me."

For some moments Jim kept silent.

"Dan, tell me about yourself," he said, finally. "What have you been doing? I feared that the French or their Hurons might lift your scalp."

"They come powerful clost to doin' it," Holcombe told him.

"Tell me about it," urged Jim.

"There's not much to tell," declared the scout. "Right after you left here last fall, the Colonel sent me north to keep an eye on the French at Champlain. I bumped into a party of Hurons, and they holed me up in a swamp. For a couple of days it looked sort of bad. Then one night I fooled them and crawled out of the trap."

Jim waited hopefully, but Holcombe showed no inclination to continue the story.

"How did you get away?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"Oh, I just fooled them," laughed Holcombe.

Jim saw that it would be useless to attempt to learn the details of the adventure, for men like Holcombe were as modest as they were brave. They regarded their thrilling adventures as mere incidents in their grim, everlasting struggle with the wilderness.

"Jim, I'll tell you one thing," Holcombe said.

"The French are gettin' ready to strike."

"Do you think so, Dan?"

"Yes, sir, I'm plumb sartin of it," declared the scout. "The French are stirrin' at all their forts. Troops and Injuns are movin' down from Canady. Last week a courier come here from Virginny to see the Colonel. Then Jack Crawford was sent hot-foot to Albany. He brung back Captain MacKenzie of the English regulars. Now there's a big powwow goin' on at the fort. Lad, I tell you things are shapin' up for a fight."

"Dan, it does seem so," Jim said, solemnly.

"For sartin," declared Holcombe.

At that moment a number of militiamen entered the barracks, and the conversation was interrupted. They came to join Jim and Holcombe. The talk soon turned to the possibility

of a clash with the French. It was evident that every one at Fort Johnson expected it, and the militiamen seemed jubilant at the prospect of advancing against the French forts.

"If the Mohawks hold with us, we shall soon drive the French back into the north," one young fellow declared, confidently.

"Well, son, the Mohawks will hold with us, but even so we've got quite a job on our hands," Holcombe warned him. "I've had a peep at some of those French forts, and they look like it might take some time to knock them down. Besides, there's plenty of men comin' down from Canady to help defend them. I've heard that two regiments of French regulars are around Montreal."

"If they know what is good for them, they'll stay there," said a strapping young militiaman.

The night was well advanced when the men finally ceased talking and climbed into the bunks. Jim, however, still loitered. He hoped that at any moment Colonel Johnson might send for him. At last he heard some one approaching the barracks. He looked expectantly toward the door. Kichkinet and three older Mohawks entered. The bunks were occupied, and the older Indians wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay upon the floor. Kichkinet seated himself beside Jim.

JIM REJOINS OLD FRIENDS

"Mohawk, did you see any one leave the fort?" inquired Jim.

"No, my brother," replied Kichkinet.

"Then it is useless to wait longer," Jim told himself.

He pointed toward the bunk, but the Mohawk shook his head.

"That is for you—you are a white man," the Mohawk told him. "I will sleep over there beside my brothers."

Jim detected subtle Indian sarcasm in the words. He felt embarrassed as he realized that it was merited. Many times he had seen aged Mohawk chiefs surrender their couches to gruff white traders who had chanced to stop at the village. The stranger in an Indian camp was invariably accorded the privileges of an honored guest. Jim rebelled at the selfish inhospitality with which the white man insulted the Indian. He felt sure, however, that if Colonel Johnson had been less importantly engaged the Mohawks would have found a hearty welcome and comfortable berths in his own quarters. Upon more than one occasion Jim had seen a company of gayly attired Mohawk warriors making themselves thoroughly at home in the spacious rooms and halls of Fort Johnson.

CHAPTER III

A CONFERENCE WITH COLONEL JOHNSON

EARLY the following day Jim went to the trading store to barter his furs with Alexander MacCullough. A small company of traders and scouts had assembled to watch the trade. Jim untied the bundle of furs, and asked MacCullough to examine them. There were many choice pelts in the collection.

"Lad, you've a good eye for fur," laughed MacCullough.

He sorted the pelts into various piles, according to size and quality. When he finished he turned to Jim for his approval.

"How does that suit you?" he asked, as he gave over the tally sheet.

"That seems about right for grades," said Jim. "How are prices?"

"Some are a bit up, and some a bit down," MacCullough told him.

He produced a price list. Jim read it with careful attention. He was satisfied with the average.

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"All right," he said.

"Good," cried MacCullough. "You're a fair-minded man, and far easier to trade with than some I know."

He glanced sharply at several of the traders, as he turned to his desk. In a few moments he gave Jim a voucher for the total value of the furs.

"How will you have it; money or trade?" he asked.

"I'll tell you later," said Jim.

He left the trading store, and turned toward the fort. A militiaman came to meet him.

"Colonel Johnson wishes to see you," he said.

"I will go at once," Jim told him.

He accompanied the man to the fort. The sentry permitted them to enter, and they went along a long hall that extended through the center of the building. The militiaman stopped before a massive, paneled door.

"Colonel Johnson is in there," he said.

He knocked. In a few moments Colonel Johnson himself opened the door. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man of about forty years, with a genial face and friendly eyes. He wore his hair in a queue, and was dressed in buckskins.

"Mr. Mason, welcome," he cried, as he offered his hand and invited Jim to enter the room.

"Thank you, sir," replied Jim.

The militiaman withdrew, and Johnson closed the door. Then he led the way to chairs beside a long table upon which were maps and documents.

"Mr. Mason, I regret that important affairs prevented me from greeting you when you arrived," he told Jim. "It seems useless to inquire after your health, for you appear as fit and hardy as a Mohawk warrior."

"I am very well, sir, and I trust that you, too, enjoy the blessings of good health," said Jim.

"Yes, I am robust enough in body, but the French and their Indians are causing me considerable distress of mind. But tell me, Mr. Mason, how are affairs at Caughnawaga? I presume that La Valle is dead, and the Mohawks are prepared to join us against the French."

For a moment Jim kept silent, and Johnson looked anxiously into his face.

"It is about La Valle that I have come to see you," said Jim.

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"Yes, yes, tell me about him," Johnson said, eagerly.

"He and that scoundrel Stockley have escaped from the Mohawk camp," Jim told him.

Colonel Johnson stared at Jim in silence. It was several moments before he recovered from his astonishment.

"Well, well, that is bad news," he said, at last. "How did they manage to get away?"

"Colonel Johnson, I would like Kichkinet to tell you that," said Jim.

"Why so?"

"Because I wish you to hear the story just as I heard it from the Mohawks."

"You surely do not suspect that the Mohawks—" Johnson stopped abruptly, and looked searchingly at Jim.

"Do not misunderstand me, sir," Jim said, quickly. "I believe the Mohawks are entirely guiltless in this unfortunate affair. There is but one among them against whom I would hold the slightest suspicion."

"And that is?" queried Johnson.

"Da-yo-ho-go, the superstitious old Medicine Man," said Jim.

Colonel Johnson raised his brows. He frowned and tapped the table with his fingers. Jim waited for him to speak.

"Mr. Mason, why do you feel suspicious of Da-yo-ho-go?"

"For several reasons," explained Jim. "First, because he is one of the few Mohawks who really feel antagonistic to our people."

"And why?" inquired Johnson.

"He claims that some of our people killed his brother, many years ago."

"Yes, I have heard that," said Johnson. "The suspicion is entirely unjustified. I have investigated and found that his brother was the victim of an unfortunate accident in which our people were absolutely blameless."

"I fear it would be difficult to convince Da-yo-ho-go," laughed Jim.

"Doubtless," agreed Johnson. "Now tell me your other reasons."

"No doubt you are aware that La Valle claimed Mohawk blood."

Colonel Johnson nodded.

"He also claimed membership in the clan of the Great Turtle, the most powerful clan in the Iroquois confederation. That, according to Mohawk law, made him a brother to old Da-yo-ho-go, who also is a member of the Great Turtle clan. La Valle was clever enough to use the relationship to good advantage. Flattery, and a constant appeal to the simple superstitions

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of old Da-yo-ho-go, eventually gave him great influence with the aged Medicine Man. Then it was but a short time until Da-yo-ho-go became the accomplice, and finally the helpless dupe of the sharp-witted half-breed. Once in the power of La Valle, I believe Da-yo-ho-go realized that the exposure and defeat of the half-breed meant his own ruin. For that reason I believe he gave aid and protection to La Valle, and, fearful that at the last moment the treacherous half-breed might betray him to the Mohawks, I believe it was old Da-yo-ho-go who finally saved him from death and made it possible for him to escape. However, Colonel Johnson, I desire that you shall hear the story from Kichkinet, and then form your own opinion."

"Does Kichkinet know of your suspicions?"

"No," replied Jim. "Kichkinet, like all his people, has implicit faith in the old Medicine Man and the mysterious powers for which he takes credit. I would not offend the Mohawk by turning suspicion upon either Da-yo-ho-go or the marvelous gifts to which he lays claim."

"That is wise," agreed Johnson. "I shall send for Kichkinet."

He went to the door and called. In a few moments a Mohawk lad appeared.

"Bring Kichkinet," Colonel Johnson instructed him.

The lad hurried away, and Colonel Johnson returned to Jim. He appeared serious and thoughtful, and Jim believed that the escape of La Valle caused him considerable uneasiness. He immediately resumed the conversation.

"Mr. Mason, the escape of La Valle is indeed unfortunate, but we may be thankful that you were successful in exposing his treachery, which I feel sure has destroyed his influence with the Mohawks. However, I have little doubt that he and his companions will cause us much trouble but I hope that he may again fall into our hands.

"And now, Mr. Mason, I shall talk of other matters. Your arrival here at this time is most fortunate. As I have already mentioned, the French are causing us considerable anxiety. Each day they are penetrating farther into our domains, and establishing substantial forts along our rivers. It is a perilous situation, and something must be done. Every moment of delay will make it more difficult and costly to dislodge them.

"The province of Virginia seems to be alert to the danger, and Governor Dinwiddie has called a council to which he has invited repre-

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sentatives from the other provinces. I have been invited to attend. Mr. Mason, I believe it would be an excellent plan for both you and Kichkinet to accompany me. You will be able to offer valuable information about the Mohawks, and at the same time you will have the opportunity to meet many of the men who are guiding the affairs of the colonies. I trust you are at liberty to accept my invitation."

It was Jim who now showed surprise. His face beamed with pleasure, and his eyes lighted with enthusiasm.

"For myself, sir, I accept with great pleasure," he said.

"Excellent," cried Colonel Johnson.

"When do you plan to go?" inquired Jim.

"On the morrow; can you be ready?"

"I can," said Jim.

"I shall provide the necessary equipment and supplies, and you will incur no expense," Colonel Johnson told him.

At that moment the Indian lad returned with Kichkinet. The Mohawk stopped at the doorway. Colonel Johnson invited him to enter.

"My friend, I am glad to see you," he said.

"Great Chief, you sent for me, and I have come," replied Kichkinet.

"It is good," said Johnson. "I have something to talk about."

Kichkinet remained silent.

"Kichkinet, your brother Achawi has told me about Tor-yoh-ne," said Johnson. "It is bad. Tell me how Tor-yoh-ne escaped from your people."

"It is very mysterious," declared Kichkinet. "When my brother Achawi, and that white man—"

"Holcombe," said Johnson.

The Mohawk nodded.

"They showed my people that Tor-yoh-ne was a Huron. Then my people were very mad. They said Tor-yoh-ne must die. They were about to kill him, but Da-yo-ho-go stopped them. Da-yo-ho-go is a great Medicine Person. He has mysterious powers. He does many wonderful things. Da-yo-ho-go talked to my people. He told them about a mysterious dream. He told them that they must not kill Tor-yoh-ne until the next sun came. He said if they killed Tor-yoh-ne before that time much harm would come of it. He said he found out about it in that dream. My people listened to the words of Da-yo-ho-go. They tied up Tor-yoh-ne and put him in a lodge to keep him until the next sun came. Then

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my uncle Short Dog, and Da-yo-ho-go and the great warrior Dancing Wolf sat down in that lodge to watch Tor-yoh-ne. He had the mysterious Medicine Creature of the Hurons marked on his breast. Da-yo-ho-go was thinking about it. He was afraid that some powerful Medicine Creature would come to help Tor-yoh-ne."

Kichkinet suddenly ceased speaking. For some minutes he appeared absorbed in deep reverie. Colonel Johnson waited patiently. His long experience with the Indians had taught him to bear with their whims.

"When it got dark Da-yo-ho-go filled the sacred Medicine Pipe and gave it to my uncle Short Dog, and Dancing Wolf," Kichkinet continued. "He told them they must smoke to keep away the powerful Huron Medicine Creatures. They smoked the pipe. Then Da-yo-ho-go filled it again, and smoked. Pretty soon they all fell asleep. They were asleep a long time. Da-yo-ho-go was the first to wake up. Light was coming into the lodge. He looked around. Tor-yoh-ne and the white prisoner were gone. My uncle Short Dog and Dancing Wolf were sleeping. Da-yo-ho-go shook them but they did not wake up. Then he ran outside. He saw two wolves running out of the camp. Then he knew that the strange Huron Medicine Crea-

tures had turned Tor-yoh-ne and the white prisoner into wolves so that they could get away. He called my people and told them about it. My people shook my uncle Short Dog and Dancing Wolf and they opened their eyes. When they found out what had happened they were very mad. Then Da-yo-ho-go told them that the mysterious Medicine Creatures must have come to the lodge and put them to sleep. Then my people said, 'Da-yo-ho-go is a great Medicine Person. He alone knows about such things. What he tells us must be true.' My uncle began to shake his head, and speak angry words. Then Da-yo-ho-go said that the mysterious Medicine Creatures had bewitched him. My people said, 'It is true; Short Dog is bewitched.' It was a long time before he came to himself. Now I have told you how this thing came to pass. It is the way Da-yo-ho-go told it to my people."

Colonel Johnson glanced sharply at Jim.

"It is very mysterious," he said, soberly.

Kichkinet nodded.

"Now, Kichkinet, I will talk about something different," said Colonel Johnson. "I am about to go on a long journey. I have asked your brother Achawi to go with me. Now I will ask you to go with me. Will you go?"

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Kichkinet showed no surprise.

"What the Great Chief asks me to do, I will do," he said.

"Good," said Johnson. "I will set out on this journey soon after the next sun appears."

"I will be ready," Kichkinet told him.

A few moments later Colonel Johnson dismissed the Mohawk. Then he turned eagerly to Jim.

"Mr. Mason, I believe your distrust of Doyo-ho-go is well founded," he said. "However, we must not permit our suspicion of the old Medicine Man to lead us into actions which might wound the pride or rouse the anger of our friends, the Mohawks."

"I realize that, sir," Jim assured him.

When Jim left the fort he found Kichkinet awaiting him. It was evident that he was eager to know the nature of the journey for which he had pledged himself. True to Indian diplomacy, however, he overcame his curiosity and waited for Jim to enlighten him.

"Mohawk, we are going to meet the great chiefs of my people," Jim told him. "We are going far away from here. Perhaps it will be many days before you return to your people."

Kichkinet remained silent.

Then Jim hurried away to find Dan Hol-

combe. He was at the barracks, greasing his beloved rifle.

"Dan, I have much to talk about," Jim said, enthusiastically.

"Set down here, and cut loose," Holcombe told him.

He listened attentively as Jim told of the escape of La Valle and Stockley. When Jim finished, Holcombe smiled and shook his head.

"Jim, I've always had doubts about old Da-yo-ho-go," he said. "Now I'm plumb sartin that he's agin us. Yes, sir, it's as plain as the trail of a bear in soft mud. With La Valle and Stockley loose, Da-yo-ho-go will need watchin'."

"Dan, don't tell your suspicions to any one," Jim cautioned, anxiously.

Holcombe winked significantly.

"An old wolf runs a silent trail," he said.

"And now, Dan, I have another surprise," Jim told him.

"Jumpin' bobcats, you're as full of surprises as an untrained colt," chuckled Holcombe.

"Dan, I am going to Virginia with Colonel Johnson," said Jim.

Holcombe whistled sharply.

"That is news, for sartin," he said. "I'm told there's big goin's on down in that province.

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Some say that Colonel Washington is gettin' ready for another wrastle with the French at Fort Duquesne. Then I've heard that General Braddock and two regiments of English troops has arrived in Virginny. Jim, it looks like you might have a chance to get into the first real fight with the French."

"Dan, do you really think so?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"Signs pint that way," replied the scout.

CHAPTER IV

AN INTERESTING JOURNEY

JIM was a-stir early the following day in preparation for his departure with Colonel Johnson. He went first to the trading store to transact his business with MacCullough.

“Mr. MacCullough, can you give me half of the value of the furs in money, and place the balance to my credit?” inquired Jim.

“That I can, James,” MacCullough agreed, amiably. “But surely, lad, you’re not planning to leave us so soon?”

“I am going away, to-day, with Colonel Johnson,” Jim told him.

“Aye?” said MacCullough.

Jim signed a receipt for the sum, and also obtained a supply of powder and lead.

“Now I am ready,” he laughed.

“And whither are you bound, James?” MacCullough inquired, curiously.

“Perhaps Colonel Johnson should tell you that,” said Jim.

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"Aye, it might be best," agreed MacCullough.

Jim left him, and went toward the fort. The sun had scarcely risen above the hilltops, but there was an unusual stir which made it plain that preparations for the departure of Colonel Johnson were already under way. A number of horses, both riding and pack animals, had been assembled; a company of militiamen waited in orderly formation; scouts and traders, and women and children had collected in the vicinity. Jim saw Kichkinet coming toward him.

"The Great Chief sent me to find you," he said.

They entered the fort, and went to the council room, where they found Colonel Johnson with a number of other officers. Jim recognized several. Among them were Lieutenant Butler, the commandant at Fort Hunter, and Lieutenant Gordon, whom Jim had met upon his first visit to Fort Johnson. He also noted a tall, dignified man in the uniform of an English officer. Jim felt sure that the latter was Captain MacKenzie from Albany, of whom Dan Holcombe had spoken.

"Mr. Mason, we shall depart within the hour," Colonel Johnson told him.

"Very good, sir," said Jim.

"It may please you to know that we shall pass the night at Schenectady."

"That is good news, indeed, sir," Jim replied, heartily.

Shortly afterward he and Kichkinet withdrew, and Jim hastened to the barracks for his rifle and accouterments. He found Dan Holcombe awaiting him.

"Well, lad, I presume you'll soon be away," said Holcombe.

"Yes, Dan; the Colonel has informed me that we shall leave within the hour," Jim told him. "I wish you might go with me."

"I'd like powerful well to go," Holcombe said, wistfully. "Jack Crawford will go with you as far as Albany."

Holcombe looked on silently while Jim gathered his belongings. Then they seated themselves on the pine bench, and talked until the notes of a bugle sounded from the fort. Jim rose to his feet.

"I must go," he said, as he offered his hand to the scout.

"Good luck, Jim," said Holcombe.

"Good luck, Dan," Jim replied, heartily.

He met Kichkinet at the fort. They entered, and presented themselves before Colonel Johnson. He had assembled his escort, and Jim

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noted that the company numbered ten, including Kichkinet and himself. Besides Colonel Johnson there were Lieutenant Gordon, Jack Crawford, the scout, Captain MacKenzie, of the English regulars, and four militiamen. With the exception of Captain MacKenzie, all were dressed in buckskins.

“Gentlemen, the time for departure is at hand,” said Colonel Johnson. “Mr. Mason, perhaps you prefer a canoe to a horse. Jack Crawford will go down to Schenectady by canoe. If you choose, I am sure he will be glad to have you and Kichkinet accompany him.”

“Thank you, sir, I confess, that like most woodmen, I am more at ease in a canoe than on a horse,” laughed Jim.

Soon afterward Colonel Johnson and his escort rode through the gate of the stockade and set out along the road to Schenectady. It was an interesting and picturesque cavalcade. At the head rode Colonel Johnson with Captain MacKenzie. Lieutenant Gordon followed; and after him came the four militiamen and the pack horses. There were but two pack animals, and they carried provisions for the journey to New York, and the personal equipment of Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon.

When the horsemen had gone, Jim and Kichkinet entered the canoe with Crawford, and paddled down the river. The long journey had been begun, and Jim believed it offered many interesting possibilities.

"Well, Mason, horse riding may be all right for those that like it, but this is my idea of real traveling," declared Jack Crawford.

"I agree with you," said Jim. "However, on the journey to Albany I fear we shall be forced to ride."

"Yes, we'll have to go by road to Albany, but if I have a choice I believe I'd prefer to walk," Crawford told him.

The river continued high and swift, and they traveled rapidly. They soon passed Colonel Johnson and his companions, and early in the afternoon they came in sight of Schenectady. Jim looked upon it with enthusiasm. It was his birthplace, and the scene of his boyish activities which had ended so abruptly with the death of his father two years before. As the canoe approached the isolated houses on the border of the settlement he began to describe familiar landmarks.

"That is the house of John Van Twiller," he said. "That stone house beyond is the mill of Peter Van Grout. I worked there one winter."

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People were appearing from the village to watch the approach of the canoe, and Jim saw many familiar figures. Then he was recognized, and his friends shouted greetings across the water. Jim waved his coonskin cap.

"It appears like they're glad to see you," laughed Crawford.

"I have been away some time," replied Jim.

Soon afterward they disembarked before the high log stockade that protected the town. Jim was immediately surrounded by a company of enthusiastic friends. He soon left them, however, and entered the village with Kichkinet. They went directly to the home of the Camerons, the Scotch clergyman and his wife who had reared Jim from infancy. Donald Cameron, a tall, broad-shouldered man with gray hair, came from the small stone house as Jim and the Mohawk approached.

"Hello, Mr. Cameron," Jim cried, gayly.

"Jim!" cried Cameron.

They clasped hands but it was several moments before either attempted to speak. Then the clergyman seized Jim by the shoulders and peered eagerly into his face.

"Jim, my boy, it is good to have you home," he said.

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"Thank you, Mr. Cameron, I am glad to come home," Jim assured him.

At that moment Mrs. Cameron appeared in the doorway. She was a short, stout, motherly-looking woman with white hair and kindly blue eyes. For an instant she hesitated at sight of the Mohawk, and then she hurried toward Jim with outstretched arms.

"My Jim!" she cried.

She clasped her arms about Jim and sought valiantly to choke back soft little sobs of joy. Jim, too, suddenly felt a queer tightness about his throat as he stooped to kiss her.

"Come, wife, this is no time for crying," Donald Cameron said, kindly.

"It is true," agreed Mrs. Cameron, as she released Jim and laughingly brushed away the tears.

"And now, my lad, come into the house, and tell us about yourself," proposed Cameron. "But wait, I see you have brought a young Mohawk."

"Yes; this young warrior is Kichkinet," said Jim. "He is my friend, and a scout and courier for Colonel Johnson."

"Young man, I am glad to know you," the clergyman said, cordially. "I bid you welcome to my home."

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Kichkinet nodded gravely.

"Does the Mohawk speak our tongue?" Cameron inquired, softly, as they entered the house.

"Very well," Jim told him. "He has been educated by Colonel Johnson."

"A great man," declared Donald Cameron.

"He will arrive here before dark," said Jim.

"Well, well, wife, hearken to that," cried Cameron. "Colonel William Johnson is on his way to the settlement."

"Our people will be glad to see him," said Mrs. Cameron. "Donald, perhaps you should tell them of it, so that Colonel Johnson may be properly received."

"I believe Jack Crawford has attended to that," Jim told her. "Colonel Johnson sent Crawford ahead with a letter to the commanding officer at the fort."

"Aye, then all will be arranged," said Mrs. Cameron.

Urged by the Camerons, Jim told modestly of the adventures that had befallen him since he left the settlement the previous year to begin his career as a trader. There was much to talk about, and Kichkinet was gradually drawn into the conversation and prevailed upon to give an interesting account of his people. Time passed rapidly and Mrs. Cameron was making prep-

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arations for the evening meal when the booming of a cannon gave sudden warning of the approach of Colonel Johnson.

"Colonel Johnson has arrived," cried Donald Cameron.

They hastened outside and saw the troops of the garrison, with fifes playing and colors unfurled, escorting Colonel Johnson into the town. He received an enthusiastic welcome from the people of Schenectady as he rode slowly toward the officers' quarters at the fort.

Jim and Kichkinet immediately went to report. An English sentry halted them. However, as Jim insisted upon seeing Colonel Johnson, and explained that they were members of the Colonel's escort, the sentry finally sent for instructions. A few moments later he permitted them to enter the fort. They found Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon with a company of English officers. Colonel Johnson rose and went to meet Jim.

"Colonel Johnson, I have no wish to intrude," said Jim. "I have come for instructions."

"We shall depart on the morrow, soon after sunrise," Colonel Johnson told him. "I shall expect you here at that time. Until then, Mr. Mason, you are free. Kindly convey my

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respects and good wishes to Mr. Cameron and his excellent wife."

"I shall, sir," Jim assured him.

When the Camerons learned that Jim planned to leave them on the following day, they were filled with gloom. They had hoped that he might remain at Schenectady through the summer.

"Jim, we have had but a glimpse of you, and now you plan to rush away into that terrible wilderness," lamented Mrs. Cameron.

"I shall return, and when I do I shall endeavor to make a longer visit," Jim promised.

"I hope so," said Donald Cameron.

They were seated at the evening meal when the town crier passed from house to house calling the people to assemble at the trading store of Diederich Suydam to hear Colonel Johnson.

"Wife, we must go," said Cameron. "Perhaps we shall hear news of great importance."

The trading store was a square, one storied log building in the center of the town. It was a popular rendezvous where one might always find an interesting company assembled for trade and discussion. When the Camerons entered with Jim and Kichkinet they found the large room crowded with a picturesque assemblage of townsfolk. There were the Dutch

traders and merchants, who composed a large proportion of the population of Schenectady, and of whom old Diederich Suydam was an interesting representative. Short and stout in stature, with a placid round face, merry blue eyes and long white hair, he was clothed in a coarse homespun coat with large brass buttons, great roomy knickerbockers buckled at the knees, heavy woolen hose, and low shoes with large copper buckles. His beloved long stemmed Dutch pipe was rarely out of hand. In striking contrast were the buckskin clad traders and frontiersmen who made the settlement their headquarters when they returned from their adventures in the forest. They were rugged, silent men whose appearance and bearing suggested the Indian. Far different were the gayly clad English troops from the garrison. Talkative and boastful, they found little in common with the modest, reticent men of the wilderness. In still greater contrast were several Indian couriers, with their cropped heads, naked backs and painted faces. It was indeed a representative company of types that composed the primitive frontier community. Jim and his friends had been there only a few moments before Colonel Johnson

arrived. He mounted a large box at the rear of the room, and began to talk.

“My friends, I wish to thank you for the kindly welcome which I have received,” he said.

“It is a great pleasure to be here.

“And now I have something serious to say to you. Troublesome times are upon us. The French seem determined to force us into war. Each day they are growing bolder, and advancing farther into our territory. Something must be done. I am on my way to attend a council with Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia, and representatives from the various provinces. I fear the result of that conference may be a declaration of war against our covetous neighbors in the north.

“My friends, I believe there are few, if any, among us who desire a conflict with the French. However, if it comes we must meet it with courage and determination. I feel certain that the young men of the colonies will gladly offer their services to protect our settlements from invasion. I also feel sure that our good friends, the Mohawks, will join us in driving the French from our borders. I have received the wampum belt from the Mohawk chief, Ha-yo-went-ha, and he has pledged himself and his people to aid us. His son, Kichkinet, whom you see

with your friend James Mason, is my courier. My friends, those young men have faced great peril and hardship to expose the treachery of a wily French emissary, and win the confidence and support of the Mohawks for our people. They have rendered valuable service to the colonies, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude."

When Colonel Johnson finished speaking, Jim was made the hero of the occasion. He sought to escape from the building, but the people of Schenectady were determined to learn the details of his adventures with the Mohawks at Caughnawaga. When he finally was forced to speak he seized the opportunity to praise Kichkinet and the Mohawks for their loyalty to the English colonists, while he minimized the value of his own heroic efforts in bringing about the alliance.

"Lad, perhaps you are a bit too modest," laughed Donald Cameron.

"Donald, it is a good trait," declared Mrs. Cameron, as she looked affectionately upon the embarrassed young woodsman.

The solemn words of Colonel Johnson made a strong impression upon the people of Schenectady, and long after he left the building they lingered to discuss the gloomy possibilities

which seemed to threaten the peace and welfare of the colonies. When the last loiterers withdrew, Jim and Kichkinet still remained to talk with old Diederich Suydam, whom Jim held in high esteem.

"Vall, Jim, things look purty bad, eh?" said Diederich, as he lighted his pipe and seated himself to talk.

"I fear so," replied Jim.

"Yah, yah, purty bad," repeated Diederich.

Then for some moments he smoked in silence, while he nodded solemnly at the young Mohawk. Jim made no effort to interrupt his thoughts for he knew from experience that the placid old Dutchman disliked to be hurried.

"Vall, Jim, I believe der war is close," he said, finally. "If dose Mohawks—"

Jim flashed a swift, warning glance, and Diederich choked back the suspicion that swept through his mind. He looked at Kichkinet and began to chuckle.

"Yah, yah, dose Mohawks are goot beebles," he said.

Jim thought he detected a flash of merriment in the dark, impassive eyes of the young Mohawk. Kichkinet, however, remained silent. Diederich drew great puffs of smoke from his pipe. It was a long time before he spoke.

"Jim, der Colonel speaks goot about you," he said, at last. "He is a great man. Berhaps if der war comes, der Colonel will make you a great officer."

"Mr. Suydam, I have no thought of such honors," laughed Jim. "If war comes, I shall be happy to offer my services to Colonel Johnson and the colony. Then I shall gladly serve in whatever capacity I may be most useful."

"Yah, yah," said Diederich. "You are yust like your varder."

The night was well advanced when they finally left him, and made their way to the home of Donald Cameron. The people of Schenectady had already retired, and the town was black and still. They were challenged by several sentries as they passed along the dark lane or street that extended through the center of the settlement.

"Who comes?" a sentry inquired, sharply.

"James Mason, and his friend Kichkinet," replied Jim.

"Pass, James Mason."

The Camerons had left a candle burning in the window as a beacon light. They entered the house, and Jim led the way to the familiar little room in the attic. He offered to share the

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narrow bed with Kichkinet, but the Mohawk shook his head.

"I will sleep here," he said, as he spread his blanket on the floor.

They rose at dawn, and found Mrs. Cameron busily engaged with preparations for breakfast. When Jim chided her for having risen at that early hour she laughed happily.

"My lad, it is the happiest task I have had since you left us," she told him.

The meal was barely finished when Jim hurried away with Kichkinet to report to Colonel Johnson at the fort. At sunrise the little company was ready to depart. Jim looked uneasily upon the horse that had been provided for his use. Kichkinet, however, shook his head.

"Great Chief, I will walk," he told Colonel Johnson.

"It is five leagues to Albany," Colonel Johnson reminded him.

"I will walk," persisted Kichkinet.

"Colonel Johnson, with your permission, I will walk with the Mohawk," laughed Jack Crawford.

"Can you keep pace with us?" Colonel Johnson asked, sharply.

"I believe so, sir," declared Crawford.

"Very well," said Colonel Johnson. "Mr.

Mason, will you ride with Lieutenant Gordon and myself? It will afford me an opportunity to talk with you."

"I shall be glad to do so, sir," said Jim.

He mounted awkwardly into the saddle, and appeared so uncomfortable and ill at ease that even Kichkinet was forced to smile. After Lieutenant Gordon had adjusted the stirrup leathers, and explained the proper seat and method of holding the reins, Jim became more confident. However, when the officer at the fort gave orders for the sounding of bugles and the firing of a cannon in honor of Colonel Johnson, Jim suddenly found himself in difficulty. The horse became frightened and bolted, and before it had run a bowshot Jim was rolling in the dust. Roars of laughter came from friends who had assembled to witness his departure, and Colonel Johnson was unable to conceal his mirth.

"Mr. Mason, I am sorry," he said, as his eyes twinkled mischievously. "Perhaps you may prefer to walk."

"Colonel Johnson, I will ride," Jim said, doggedly.

"Good!" cried Colonel Johnson.

Before making another attempt Jim carefully tied his rifle to the saddle. Then he again

clambered clumsily upon the horse, and rode boldly away as his friends cheered enthusiastically. He waved his cap at the Camerons, and almost brought fresh disaster upon himself, for the horse shied and threatened to unseat him. Jack Crawford was close by, however, and seized the bridle in time to save Jim from another humiliating tumble.

"Do you like horse riding?" the scout asked, roguishly.

"Perhaps I shall if I can remain mounted long enough," said Jim.

Then Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon rode up alongside of him, and he felt more secure. They had already passed through the gate of the stockade, and were proceeding along the highway to Albany. Crawford and Kichkinet dropped to the rear of the procession, and followed close behind the pack horses.

"We shall pass the night at Albany, and to-morrow set out for New York," Colonel Johnson explained.

Jim wondered if he would be forced to ride the entire distance. He considered the possibility with gloomy forebodings. Colonel Johnson appeared to have read his thoughts.

"From Albany to New York we shall travel by water," he said.

“Good!” Jim cried, impulsively.

Colonel Johnson laughed.

For some distance the road continued along the river, and they soon reached the Carrying Place, where the water plunged over a high rocky ledge and filled the air with spray. Then they turned toward Albany, and came in sight of the town shortly before midday. Five years had passed since Jim had visited the settlement with his father, and he was surprised at the growth of the town. Like Schenectady, Albany had been founded by the Dutch, and they composed the greater part of the population. Most of them were merchants, or traders with the Indians, and many of them had accumulated fortunes.

As Colonel Johnson approached the town a cannon boomed a salute. A few moments afterward a company of English troops and a delegation of citizens led by the mayor marched out to meet him. After listening to a somewhat lengthy speech from the mayor, Colonel Johnson was escorted into Albany. The people, like those of Schenectady, accorded him a rousing welcome, and from doors and windows of the quaint Dutch houses stout, rosy-cheeked dames and maids waved their kerchiefs as he passed.

Colonel Johnson and his escort went directly

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to the fort, which was situated on the summit of a low steep hill at the rear of the town. He and Lieutenant Gordon were lodged in the quarters of the officers, and Jim and the other members of the company were provided with quarters in the barracks. Jim noted a striking contrast between the English regular soldiers and the raw colonial militiamen with whom he had associated at Fort Hunter. The English troops appeared to be under strict and constant discipline, and seemed to lack the jolly, informal spirit of comradeship which prevailed between officers and men of the colonial militia.

Late in the day Jim and Kichkinet accompanied Jack Crawford into the town. They moved slowly along a wide avenue or roadway that extended through the center of the town, and upon which were situated a public market, a large meeting house, or town hall, a guard house and two churches. The houses were of Dutch architecture, and similar in type to those of Schenectady, with steep tiled roofs, gabled windows, quaint half-doors and small porches, or stoops, where the family assembled for evening gossip. Each house had a front yard in which a large tree gave shade during the warm weather. A large pasture had been reserved on a flat grassy plain at one end of the

village, and there the cows were turned out to graze. At evening they walked solemnly down the main street of the town, and stopped before the doors of their owners to be milked. It was a novel and interesting sight to the young Mohawk.

Kichkinet, himself, appeared to be equally interesting to the people of Albany. A company of curious boys and girls soon gathered about him, and looked into his face, with wide, frightened eyes. Many of the older people, too, stopped and stared after him as he passed. They appeared to be less accustomed to the visit of the Indian than the people of Schenectady.

At night the people assembled at the town hall, and Colonel Johnson addressed them. He repeated the solemn warning which he had sounded at Schenectady, and the audience listened with sober attention. Many who went to hear him were unable to understand his words, and Jim was amused at the Dutch jargon into which his talk was translated for the benefit of those who could not understand English.

"They are a queer people," declared Jack Crawford.

"But a bit sharp," laughed Jim.

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“Aye, sharp, indeed,” agreed Crawford.

Early the following day Colonel Johnson and his companions went to the river, where two bateaux were placed at his service for the long journey to New York. Jack Crawford and a militiaman were instructed to return to Fort Johnson with the horses. Then the provisions and baggage were loaded, and the little company embarked. Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon, with two militiamen, entered the first bateau. Jim and Kichkinet entered the other boat with the third militiaman. A few moments later they left the shore and moved slowly down the river, while cannons roared from the fort, and the band from the garrison played the English anthem.

“This is what I call getting away in proper style,” laughed the young militiaman with Jim.

“And I call it a waste of good powder,” replied the practical young woodsman.

CHAPTER V

JIM EMBARKS FOR VIRGINIA

FOR five days the bateaux bearing Colonel Johnson and his companions drifted slowly down the noble river that had been named for Hudson, the hardy Dutch navigator, who discovered it almost a century and a half before. It was a fascinating journey through a picturesque and primitive country. Once beyond the borders of the settlement at Albany, there were few evidences of human habitation. The river made its way through an interesting succession of wide grassy meadows, low wooded hills and high granite capped crags. The great primeval forest extended everywhere. Wild life was abundant. Eagles soared majestically above the peaks, wild fowl rose from the marshes, and immense flocks of pigeons flew northward to their breeding grounds. The river teemed with fish that had come up from the sea to their spawning beds. Deer and elk showed themselves at the edge of the forest. Turkeys called from the thickets. Then, when

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day gave way to night, the howl of the wolf and the call of the owl echoed wierdly through the wilderness.

"This is a glorious country," Jim said, enthusiastically.

"Ha-wen-ne-yu made it for my people," Kichkinet told him.

Toward the end of the fifth day they reached the northern end of the island upon which the Dutch had established the primitive little hamlet that had passed into the hands of the English, and become the thriving town of New York. As Colonel Johnson and his companions passed the end of the island they saw smoke rising above the trees, and soon afterward several Indians appeared at the edge of the woods.

"Injuns," said the young militiaman.

Kichkinet watched closely as the Indians entered a dugout, or crude wooden canoe, and paddled toward the bateaux. At that moment Colonel Johnson drew up alongside.

"These Indians are Manhattans," he said. "They are friendly. Their village is located at the northern end of the island."

There were three Indians in the canoe, and before they ventured within rifle shot they stopped and raised their paddles as a sign of friendliness. Colonel Johnson replied to their

signal, and they approached the bateaux. As they came close the man in the bow of the canoe called out in a strange and unfamiliar tongue.

"Mohawk, do you know those words?" Colonel Johnson asked Kichkinet.

The Mohawk shook his head.

"My friends, we do not speak your words," Colonel Johnson told them.

The Indians talked rapidly among themselves. Then the man in the center of the canoe replied in English.

"Friends," he said.

"Good," replied Colonel Johnson.

He asked the militiaman to open one of the bundles, and take out some tobacco which he offered to the Indians.

"My friends, we give you this tobacco because you are friendly," he said.

"Good," replied the Indian. "Where from?"

"Albany," said Colonel Johnson.

"Where go?"

"New York."

The Indian translated the information for his comrades. They were talking eagerly, and looking closely at Kichkinet.

"Who?" the spokesman inquired, sharply, as he pointed at the Mohawk.

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"He is my friend," explained Colonel Johnson.

"Mohawk!" cried the Indian. "Mohawks are enemies."

There was an ominous flash in his eyes as he turned to his companions. Kichkinet had reached for his bow. Jim looked uneasily at Colonel Johnson. He appeared calm and undisturbed. The militiamen had secured their rifles, and were watching the Indians. The latter were glaring defiantly at Kichkinet. It was an awkward situation.

"My friends, listen to my words," Colonel Johnson said, sharply. "You came to us with good words. Now you appear angry. It is bad. We shall pass on and leave you."

The Indians continued to talk excitedly among themselves. Several times they pointed toward Kichkinet. At length the spokesman addressed Colonel Johnson.

"Mohawks kill my people," he said.

"If people fight, some must die," Colonel Johnson told him. "It is foolish for Indians to fight each other. If you fight with us we shall surely kill you. See, we have the long guns that kill with fire and smoke. You cannot escape. My friends, we do not wish to harm you. Return to your village."

The Indians held another animated council, and Colonel Johnson waited patiently. It was some time before they reached a decision.

"We go," the leader said, finally.

"Good," replied Colonel Johnson.

They turned the canoe and paddled rapidly toward the shore. When they were beyond rifle shot Colonel Johnson gave orders to proceed down the river.

"Kichkinet, do you know those people?" inquired Jim.

"No," the Mohawk said, scornfully. "They are as timid as women. When my people meet their enemies they kill them."

As they proceeded slowly down the river they saw small stumpy clearings, and the isolated log cabins of the courageous pioneers who had forsaken the protection of the settlement. Then, several leagues farther on, they came in sight of New York, at the extreme southern end of the Island. Jim looked upon it with eager, fascinated eyes. His father had visited the town upon several occasions, and Jim had longed to see the wonderful place of which his father had told. Now his ambition was about to be realized, and he looked forward to the experience with enthusiasm.

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"Ever been to New York?" inquired the militiaman.

"No," Jim told him. "Have you?"

"Yes, indeed, several times," the soldier said, boastfully. "I brought the Colonel down the river twice before. You'll see something you'll not be likely to forget."

As the bateaux moved slowly toward the shore they passed a number of ships and barges that were anchored before the town. They were the first real ships Jim had seen, and he and Kichkinet were greatly interested.

Then a cannon suddenly boomed from the fort, and they turned their eyes toward the town. The fort, surrounded by a log stockade, was situated in the center of an open lawn or common. A regiment of English troops had been assembled beyond the stockade, and a great throng of people waited along the waterfront. Colonel Johnson was met at the wharf by a company of English officers and a number of town officials. He was escorted to a large stone mansion, and Jim, with Kichkinet and the militiamen, were taken to the barracks.

"Shall I show you around a bit?" the soldier asked, eagerly.

"Yes, yes, I wish to see everything worth seeing," said Jim.

"If Colonel Johnson has no need of us, we'll walk about the town," the militiaman told him.

"Good," agreed Jim.

The militiaman soon returned and said that they were free until the following morning, when they would board one of the vessels for the voyage to Virginia. Jim's eyes flashed at the announcement. The thought of a real sea voyage roused his imagination.

"Have you been there?" he asked the militiaman.

"No; and I'm not going," the militiaman said, gloomily. "Only you and the Mohawk will go with the Colonel and Lieutenant Gordon. The rest of us will return to Albany."

They left the barracks and went out to inspect the town. Jim and Kichkinet were astounded at the size and importance of the settlement. Neither of them had ever seen so many people. The population appeared to be composed of many nationalities. Besides the familiar Dutch burghers, they saw English officers and civilians, many of the latter richly dressed and attended by servants, Germans, Swedes, and a number of African negroes who had been imported into the province as slaves. The town was the scene of bustling activity. It contained numerous streets and lanes and

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many houses, most of them similar in appearance to those at Albany and Schenectady. There were shops, a printing house, several large halls or meeting houses, a court, a number of churches and several public taverns. Gay companies of ladies and gentlemen rode through the streets; squads of soldiers loitered about the fort; little groups of neighbors chatted before the houses; rough clad sailors from the ships in the harbor came from the taverns; buckskin clad traders and couriers loitered before the shop windows; clumsy two-wheeled carts rumbled along the thoroughfares. Every one appeared to be busy. The lads from the wilderness found much to interest them, and darkness had already fallen when they finally returned to the barracks.

“Well, Mohawk, what do you think of it?” Jim asked, curiously.

“It is a great village,” declared Kichkinet.

Jim found it difficult to sleep, for his mind was filled with thoughts of the long voyage to Virginia. He tossed restlessly in his bunk until the first rays of daylight entered through the windows of the barracks. Then he rose and went outside. Kichkinet awaited him. They wandered toward the wharf, but saw no one but the sentries about the fort. The latter per-

mitted them to pass, and they spent some time watching the vessels in the harbor. Jim was particularly interested in a large four-masted ship, which he believed might be the vessel that would carry them to Virginia.

“Achawi, how do your people move those great canoes?” inquired Kichkinet.

Jim explained that the vessels were provided with large sails which caught the wind and drove them on their course. The Mohawk appeared bewildered.

“It is mysterious,” he said, finally.

The notes of a bugle recalled them to the fort, and they found the troops already at mess. Soon afterward two companies of provincial militia, wearing gaudy new uniforms, were mustered on the common before the fort. A great throng of people assembled to watch them, and it soon became evident that these troops were about to embark on one of the vessels. Their baggage had already been carried to the wharf, and a number of small boats were taking it toward the large four-masted ship that was anchored in the harbor. Jim wondered if the troops were going to Virginia. He asked a man who appeared to be a trader.

“Yes, they’re going to join General Brad-dock and his regulars,” the man told him.

At that moment the band of the regiment began to play, and a number of officers came from the fort and marched toward the troops. Jim saw Colonel Johnson, richly dressed in civilian attire, walking beside the leading officer.

“Who is that officer beside Colonel Johnson?” Jim asked the trader.

“Bless me, don’t you know *him*?” the man asked in astonishment. “That is Colonel Gage, who commands our troops.”

“Thank you,” Jim replied, with considerable embarrassment.

The officers made a formal tour of inspection along the lines of rigid militiamen. When the ceremony was concluded Colonel Gage and his escort stood at the end of the common, and the troops marched past on the way to the wharf. Most of the people followed them, and there was an affecting scene as the soldiers bade farewell to their relatives and friends. Then they entered small boats and were taken to the ship.

A few moments afterward Colonel Johnson sent a courier for Jim and Kichkinet. They hurried to the barracks for their belongings, and joined Colonel Johnson at the wharf. Jim was introduced to Colonel Gage and several other officers, and then they entered a long whaling boat and were rowed to the ship. When

they reached it they were forced to climb a swinging rope ladder to gain the deck.

"Mr. Mason, it will give me pleasure if you will serve as my aide," Colonel Johnson told Jim.

"I shall consider it an honor, sir," replied Jim.

"It will entitle you to the rating of a junior officer and assure you more comfortable quarters. I believe it will be well to keep Kichkinet with you. The soldiers have little regard for the Indians, and I fear trouble if the Mohawk is left among them."

"I shall keep him with me," said Jim.

"You may occupy quarters with Lieutenant Gordon and myself," Colonel Johnson told him.

They entered a small cabin in the forward part of the ship. It contained four bunks, and Jim believed that his accommodations would be far more comfortable than the quarters below deck which had been assigned to the troops.

"Now we will go on deck and witness preparations for our departure," said Colonel Johnson.

They found most of the troops crowded along the rail to wave farewell to the friends who had assembled along the water front. Sailors had already climbed aloft to unfurl the sails, and

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a squad of their companions were busily engaged hauling in the heavy anchor. Then a bugle sounded, and all stood at attention while a sergeant raised the English flag on a halyard. A moment afterward a cannon sounded from the fort, and the shrill notes of fifes and the beating of drums echoed across the water. Cheers rose from the crowds on shore, and the troops replied with ringing hurrahs. Then the sails unfolded and swelled before the breeze. There was a straining of ropes, and a creaking of spars. Slowly, quietly, the ship gathered headway, and glided away on the long cruise to Virginia.

"Now you see how my people move their great canoes," Jim told Kichkinet.

The Mohawk kept silent. He was absorbed in watching the sailors as they clambered down through the rigging. It was a long time before he spoke.

"Achawi, when I go to my village, and tell my people what I have seen they will say, 'It cannot be true; the white men have bewitched him,' " he said finally.

"I will tell them that it is true," Jim assured him.

"They will not believe your words," declared Kichkinet.

CHAPTER VI

AN ADVENTURE AT SEA

FOR two days the ship sailed smoothly in calm seas, and every one was in high spirits. There was much frolicking among the soldiers, most of whom were young men, and Jim soon established his reputation as a wrestler. He also found an opportunity to show his skill with the rifle, for the vessel passed through great schools of porpoises, which offered tempting marks as they bounded from the water in play.

“Mr. Mason, you have a stout heart, a clear brain, and a true eye; it is an unusual combination,” declared Colonel Johnson.

“If I possess any talents, sir, I have inherited them from my father,” Jim said, loyally.

The following day brought a sudden change of weather, and the skipper declared that the signs gave warning of a storm. He glanced uneasily at the sky and shook his head.

“It looks like the makin’s of a bad nor’-

easter," he told Colonel Johnson, as he went away to join the man at the wheel.

"Mr. Mason, you have had considerable experience in noting the weather; do you anticipate a storm?" Colonel Johnson asked Jim.

"It looks like it, sir," said Jim.

The indications seemed to confirm his prediction. The sky was dark and threatening, and a dense foggy haze lurked above the horizon. A sharp wind sprang up out of the north. The sea had suddenly taken on drab, somber tones, and long, rolling billows caused the ship to lurch unsteadily. As the day progressed the wind increased, and the sea grew higher. The smooth rolling billows gave way to long lines of curling whitecaps, and the ship tossed wildly. Toward evening the captain gave orders to reef the sails, and before dark the command was repeated.

"Mr. Mason, have you found your sea legs?" inquired Colonel Johnson.

"I fear not, sir," laughed Jim. "I seem to be rather unsteady on my feet."

With the coming of darkness the storm increased in violence, and the captain ordered every one from the deck. The wind had reached the proportions of a gale, and it was accompanied by a perfect deluge of rain. The

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sea rose steadily, and great waves buffeted the ship. The decks were flooded, and water poured down the companionways and into the quarters of the troops. Few of the men had been to sea, and it was not long before most of them were sick. Jim, too, soon felt the effect of the wild tossing. Kichkinet was already helpless in his bunk.

"Achawi, I am about to die," he said.

"No, my brother, the storm will soon pass and then you will be well," Jim said, encouragingly.

At that moment the ship lurched wildly, and Jim was thrown against the side of the cabin. For the moment he was bewildered and stunned. As he rose unsteadily the vessel appeared to rise on end, and he slid to the doorway. Colonel Johnson assisted him to his feet, and helped him to reach his bunk.

"We shall be safer lying down," said Colonel Johnson.

"I feel scarcely able to do much else," Jim replied, weakly.

The violent motion of the ship had made it necessary to extinguish the little swinging lamp that lighted the cabin, and for long dreary hours they lay in darkness, listening to the raging of the storm. The wind moaned and roared

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through the rigging, the furious downpour of rain continued, and above the wild tumult of the storm sounded the angry, ominous challenge of the sea.

"It is the fierce Water Monsters," declared the superstitious Mohawk. "They will tear apart this great canoe and destroy us."

Jim was too sick and miserable to reply. He clung to the side of his bunk, listening fearfully for the final crash that would proclaim the breaking up of the ship. It seemed impossible that the vessel could long survive the terrific impact of the huge waves that were crashing against it. Then he suddenly thought of the captain and crew. He felt sure that they were somewhere on that perilous storm-swept deck, fighting a desperate battle against wind and sea. The thought made him eager to be of service in the emergency. He rose languidly from his bunk.

"Colonel Johnson, perhaps the captain and his crew need help," he said. "I shall be glad to offer my services."

"I fear at such a time we landsmen can be of slight assistance," Colonel Johnson told him. "Our efforts to aid might do more harm than good, and I believe Captain Barker will be

greatly displeased if we disobey his orders and venture upon the deck."

"Very good, sir," agreed Jim.

The storm continued throughout the night, but at dawn the rain ceased, and soon afterward the wind began to die down. The sea, however, still buffeted the vessel with unabated fury. The captain had furled all but the small sails which were necessary to maintain headway and prevent the ship from becoming easy prey for the mountainous waves. Lashed to the wheel, the courageous skipper and two seamen had remained at their post throughout the night. At dawn they were relieved by the second officer and his assistants. Jim and Kichkinet were making slow, cautious progress along the deck as the captain went toward his quarters.

"Captain Barker, you have done a big night's work," said Jim.

"Well, we weathered the blow, but it was a nasty one," replied the captain.

It was not long before some of the troops began to appear. Most of them looked pale and haggard, and it was evident that they had passed a distressing night. Jim and the Mohawk joined a little group of militiamen who were seated upon the deck.

"If I ever get my feet on land again I reckon

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I'll know enough to stay there," declared one of the company. "I'd sooner face all the Injuns in the woods than this boilin' sea."

Most of his comrades indorsed his choice. The sea still was high, and the ship rolled and pitched violently. Another little company of soldiers appeared from the companionway, and moved unsteadily along the deck. Several, however, turned toward the rail. A few moments afterward a cry of alarm rang through the ship.

"Man overboard! Man overboard!"

The militiamen sprang to their feet and rushed to the rail. They saw one of their companions struggling in the water. For an instant his white face was turned appealingly toward the deck, and then the ship swept past him. The soldiers ran to the stern, and saw him battling valiantly for his life. The man at the wheel had turned the ship into the wind, and the second officer shouted orders to the crew.

"Man the boats!" he cried.

Sailors sprang to the davits and worked frantically to lower a boat. In the meantime the ship had veered around. The moments seemed hours to the anxious company who watched from the deck. At last, however, the

ship came about and sailed back toward the swimmer. Several militiamen had secured ropes, and were waiting for an opportunity to throw them to the unfortunate man in the water. Guided by the cries of the sailors in the bow, the man at the wheel steered the ship toward the swimmer. Then, as the vessel came alongside of him, they lowered the boat. When it was half way to the water one of the ropes slipped from the pulley and jammed, and the boat hung suspended between the deck and the sea. In the meantime the man in the water was tiring. His friends hurled the ropes toward him, but they fell short. He was directly beside the ship when he suddenly raised his arms and sank.

“He is gone,” cried his friends.

A moment afterward he appeared again, and renewed his struggles. The sailors worked desperately to free the boat, but the ship rolled heavily and they made little progress. One of the soldiers tossed a rope end within a foot of the exhausted swimmer but he was unable to seize it. He began to sink, and his comrades groaned in dismay. Then Jim Mason clambered over the rail, and poised himself for a dive into the sea.

“Achawi!” Kichkinet shouted, warningly.

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Jim dove and struck the water within arm-length of the militiaman. They disappeared together. Those on the ship watched with bated breath. Long, torturing moments passed. They failed to appear.

"They've clinched and gone to the bottom," cried a white-faced militiaman.

"There they are!" shouted his companions.

At that moment Jim rose to the surface, and brought the militiaman with him. The former appeared limp and helpless, and Jim struggled fiercely to bring him within reach of the ship. After a heroic fight against the waves he finally got near enough to seize the end of a rope that had been thrown from the deck. He fastened it beneath the arms of the unconscious militiaman, and signaled for his companions to draw him to the deck. A mighty cheer rose from the ship, but it was followed by cries of alarm as Jim was swept away on the crest of a great wave. It carried him some distance astern of the vessel, and far beyond reach of the ropes.

"Lower the boats; lower the boats!" cried the frantic militiamen.

Kichkinet climbed to the rail and prepared to leap into the sea, but Colonel Johnson dragged him back.

"You cannot reach Achawi," he said.

"Achawi saved my life; I will not let him die alone," cried the loyal young Mohawk as he fought to free himself from the powerful grasp of Colonel Johnson.

In the meantime Jim struggled valiantly to remain on top of the water. His boyhood experiences along the Mohawk river had made him a strong and skillful swimmer, but he made little progress in the raging sea. Each wave carried him farther from the ship, and great white topped billows broke over him with a smothering lather of foam. Aware that it would be folly to attempt to reach the ship, he concentrated his efforts upon remaining afloat until help came.

"They will come for me," he told himself, hopefully.

At last he saw the ship turning about, and a boat being lowered toward the water. At that moment, however, his strength suddenly left him and he felt himself going down. A wave broke over him, and he began to choke. For an instant he sank below the surface, but he struggled wildly and regained the top of the water. Then he saw the small boat coming toward him. It seemed to be a long way off.

"I - must - keep - fighting," he gasped.

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Soon afterward another great wave broke over him, and forced him far down into the depths. He was a long time regaining the surface, and the effort sapped the last of his strength. As his head finally rose above the water he looked despairingly for the little boat that was speeding to save him. It was close at hand, and Jim made feeble efforts to remain afloat until it came. Exhaustion had overcome him, however, and he was powerless. A black mist suddenly closed over his eyes, and his arms sank helplessly at his sides. He attempted to shout, but the water rushed into his mouth and choked him. Then the sea swept over him, and he disappeared.

At that instant the boat reached the spot where he had gone down, and Kichinet dove boldly into the sea. He swam far down into the murky green depths, and seized Jim by the hair. Then, slowly, painfully, he fought his way to the surface. The boat had been carried some distance away, but the crew saw him and rowed frantically to save him.

“Hold out, Injun, we’ll get you!” shouted the man at the tiller.

As a swimmer, Kichkinet was far inferior to Jim, and he soon became bewildered in the heavy sea. Besides, he was tortured by his

superstitious fear of the terrible Water Monsters. He struggled heroically to hold Jim at the top of the water, but the weight of the helpless young woodsman was a severe handicap. Twice the waves broke over him and forced him under water, but he held to his burden and fought his way to the surface. Then, as his strength began to fail, the boat came alongside and strong arms reached down and seized him.

When Jim regained consciousness he found himself lying between blankets on the deck of the ship. Colonel Johnson was seated beside him, and behind him were the anxious officers and militiamen. They raised a rousing cheer as Jim opened his eyes and smiled at them. Then the young fellow whom he had saved came and knelt beside him.

"You saved my life, and almost lost your own in the effort," he said, soberly. "How can I express my gratitude?"

"Don't try," laughed Jim.

"My lad, you caused me the most anxious moments of my life," Colonel Johnson told him. "I thank God the Mohawk was able to save you."

Jim stared at him in wide-eyed astonishment. He looked at the young militiaman for confirmation. The latter nodded.

"It was the Mohawk who saved you," he said.

"The Mohawk?" Jim said, incredulously. "Why - how - "

"He dove from the boat, as you went down, and brought you to the surface," Colonel Johnson explained.

Jim sat up and looked about with flashing eyes.

"Where is Kichkinet?" he cried.

Kichkinet made his way from the throng of soldiers. Jim struggled to his feet to meet him. He offered his hand and peered eagerly into the eyes of the Mohawk.

"My brother, I thank you," said Jim. "I believe you know what is in my heart."

Kichkinet nodded.

Then Jim turned to the militiamen.

"My friends," he said, "you have just witnessed striking proof of the loyal devotion of the Indian for his friend. If there are any among you who have held a poor opinion of the Indians, I trust that what you have seen will destroy your doubts and win your respect and friendship for those splendid people."

"Three cheers for the young Mohawk," cried a soldier.

They were given with enthusiasm.

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“And three more for James Mason,” proposed the young militiaman whom Jim had saved.

“And now, my friends, three for the brave fellows who rowed that little boat through the raging seas,” said Jim.

CHAPTER VII

JIM BECOMES A SCOUT FOR GENERAL BRADDOCK

SEVERAL days later the ship rounded the long, projecting point of land that separated the waters of Chesapeake bay from the ocean.

“Now we’re on the last leg of our journey,” declared the captain. “We’ll soon enter the Potomac river, and then it will be straight on to our destination.”

At midday the ship turned northward along the splendid river that led directly to Alexandria, where General Braddock had assembled his forces for the march against Fort Duquesne. However, as the river was crooked, and the winds light and uncertain, it was several days before the vessel reached its destination.

The militiamen were jubilant at the thought of leaving the ship. Most of them had found the voyage tedious and distressful, and they were anxious to be ashore. Once in sight of

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the rendezvous, they crowded along the rail and looked eagerly toward the encampment.

"I'll be mighty glad to stretch my legs on the good green earth again," declared a young militiaman.

"Maybe you'll have to stretch 'em considerable before we reach Duquesne," laughed a comrade.

As the ship finally dropped anchor, it was welcomed with a noisy salute from the batteries on shore. A large body of troops had been assembled along the river. Jim noted that several companies wore blue uniforms.

"Who are those men?" he asked a sergeant who stood beside him.

"Those are the troops of the province—Virginians," the soldier told him.

At that moment a boat put out from the shore, and Jim saw that it bore the English flag and carried several officers. There was a sudden stir on the ship, and the militiamen were drawn up along the rail to receive the visitors. Colonel Gage with Colonel Johnson, and a number of other officers waited on deck to receive them. After the official greeting, Colonel Gage and his staff accompanied the visitors to the encampment.

"There'll be a long powwow and plenty of

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hand shakin' before the rest of us get ashore," grumbled the sergeant.

It was not long, however, before a number of boats approached the ship, and the militiamen were ordered to gather their belongings and prepare to disembark. They hurried below deck for their blankets and accouterments. A few moments later they crowded into the boats and were rowed to the shore. Jim found a courier from Colonel Johnson waiting at the wharf.

"Colonel Johnson desires to see you," he said.

Jim and Kichkinet accompanied the soldier to a tent at one end of the encampment, where they found Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon.

"Mr. Mason, you will make this your headquarters," said Colonel Johnson.

"Very good, sir," said Jim.

Soon afterward he and the Mohawk went out to look about the encampment. They found it an interesting and bustling community. There were many long lines of white tents with narrow avenues, or lanes, between the rows. At one end of the camp were the tents of the officers. Several large mess tents occupied the center of the encampment, and at the far end were the wagons and horses. The latter were

tied to a long picket rope that extended along the edge of the camp. Jim and the Mohawk were particularly interested in the long line of gun carriages upon which were mounted the cannons for the destruction of the French fort. They were absorbed in examining them when they were suddenly challenged by a red-coated English sentry.

"Hi there, what you doin' about them guns?" he inquired, suspiciously.

"We were just looking at them," said Jim.

"Well, come on away from 'em," ordered the sentry. "Who are you and where have you come from?"

"I am James Mason of Schenectady," said Jim.

"Don't know you, an' never heard of the place you mention," the soldier told him. "Sounds like one o' them outlandish Indian names."

"It is an Indian name," explained Jim.

"Hm," grumbled the sentry. "I seen right away that one o' you was Indian, but I didn't suspect the other one."

"There is no cause for suspicion," Jim said, skarpely.

"Well, I'm not so sure o' that," replied the soldier.

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"What do you mean?" Jim demanded, indignantly.

"I'm here under orders to watch them guns, an' I intend to do my duty," said the sentry. "When I see strangers prowlin' around 'em I'm due to find out who they are, an' what their business is. You're a stranger, an' I want to know about you. How did you get into the camp, anyway?"

"Perhaps Colonel Johnson will tell you," said Jim.

"Never heard o' *HIM*, neither," declared the soldier.

"Well, my friend, you may before long," Jim replied, lightly. "Come, Mohawk, we will move on."

"Stop!" cried the sentry, as he raised his rifle.

Jim turned in surprise. For an instant his eyes flashed threateningly. Then he smiled.

"You appear to be irritable," Jim said, quietly.

"Now, you listen to me," said the sentry. "You've not told me what I wish to know, an' I don't intend you shall go out as easy as you came in. Answer my questions or I'll call the guard."

"I have answered them," said Jim.

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"Then you've nothin' more to say?"

"No."

"All right, my fine buck," the soldier cried, threateningly.

He dropped his rifle into the hollow of his arm, and raised his fingers to his lips. Three shrill whistles appeared to be the signal for the guard.

"Don't try to get away," the sentry warned. "Now you're under arrest."

"Have no fear," Jim replied, impatiently.

In a few moments a corporal and four soldiers arrived. They, too, were English regulars.

"What's wrong?" inquired the corporal, as he glanced suspiciously at Jim and the Mohawk.

"I found 'em pokin' about the guns, an' when I questioned 'em they refused information. I don't know who they are or how they got here. Better take 'em to headquarters."

"One moment," cautioned Jim, as the soldiers came toward him. "Your friend has misstated the facts. I told him my name, and the place I came from. If you are equally curious I shall be glad to tell you."

"Well, who are you?" the corporal demanded, brusquely.

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“James Mason, of Schenectady.”

“And the Indian?”

“Tell him,” Jim told Kichkinet.

Kichkinet appeared offended. Then Jim suddenly recalled that an Indian considered it an affront to his pride to be compelled to tell his own name to a stranger.

“He is Kichkinet; his father is a great Mohawk chief,” explained Jim.

“What are you doing here?”

“As I have already explained to your friend, perhaps Colonel Johnson will tell you that.”

“Colonel Johnson?” repeated the corporal. “Is he an officer with the troops that have just arrived from the north?”

“He came with Colonel Gage,” said Jim.

The corporal suddenly appeared embarrassed. He looked uneasily at the sentry.

“Then, Bill, I guess it’s all right,” he said. “By the way, what is your regiment?”

“I am not in the service,” said Jim.

“Servant for Colonel—what’s his name?”

“Colonel Johnson; but I am not a servant,” Jim told him. “And now I am becoming a bit tired of this foolish talk. May I go?”

The corporal and his companions exchanged glances. The poise of the calm young woods-

man made them somewhat uneasy. They began to wonder if they had blundered.

"Yes, you may go," agreed the corporal.

"Thank you," said Jim. "If you desire any further information you may find me at the headquarters of Colonel Johnson."

"Whew," cried the sentry, when Jim had gone. "Perhaps I was a bit too hasty that time. Bless my soul, who can he be? You don't suppose he's some one of importance, do you?"

"You can't tell in this strange country," the corporal told him. "Some of the real great men wear clothes like the Indians in the daytime, and dress in satins at night. They're a queer lot, Bill, but, dang me, I sort o' like their independence."

As Jim and Kichkinet passed slowly along the line of tents they attracted attention and comment from the red-coated English regulars. Then they suddenly discovered several men who were dressed in buckskins, and Jim turned in their direction.

"Good day, gentlemen," he said, pleasantly, as he approached.

"Good even', sir," replied a tall young fellow, who spoke with a soft, pleasing drawl. "Did you all just get in?"

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"Yes; we came with Colonel Johnson and the New York troops," Jim told him.

"I reckon," said the young Virginian.

He was a rugged, well-proportioned young chap with an honest face, and bold brown eyes. Jim was favorably impressed.

"My name is Dick Clayborne, sir, of Richmond," he said, as he rose and offered his hand.

"I am James Mason of Schenectady," said Jim. "This young warrior is my friend, Kich-kinet; his father is a great chief of the Mohawks."

"Gentlemen, I am glad to know you," replied the Virginian. "Shake hands with my friends George Bradford and Robert Carroll."

They exchanged greetings, and Jim and the Mohawk seated themselves before the little tent for a friendly chat. Bradford was a manly-looking young fellow who appeared to be about the age of Clayborne and Jim, but Carroll was considerably older.

"I reckon you all have come to scout for General Braddock," said Clayborne.

"No;" replied Jim. "At present I am acting as aide to Colonel Johnson."

"I have heard that he is a great man with the Indians," said Carroll.

"He is their loyal friend and adviser," declared Jim.

"Well, they'll need him down here," laughed Clayborne. "Neither General Braddock nor his troops have much regard for the Indians or our own militia. They seem to place little value upon the services of either.

"That is unfortunate," said Jim.

"Very," agreed Clayborne. "Perhaps when they really get into the wilderness and meet the French and their Indians and rangers they may form a better opinion of our troops."

"I feel certain of it," declared Jim.

Shortly afterward Jim and Kichkinet left the scouts, and went to their tent. Both Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon were absent. It was not long, however, before they returned.

"Well, Mr. Mason, have you looked over the camp?" inquired Colonel Johnson.

"We have seen a large part of it, sir," Jim told him.

"What do you think of it?"

"I found it very interesting," said Jim.

"It is possible that we shall be here many days, as a number of the delegates from the provinces have not yet arrived," Colonel Johnson told him.

It was a week later when the last of the dele-

gates finally arrived, and Governor Dinwiddie called the conference to order. On the second day Jim and Kichkinet were summoned before the council to give testimony concerning the Mohawks. Many famous men were seated about the council table, and Jim was greatly interested as Colonel Johnson told their names. Besides Governor Dinwiddie, there were Colonel George Washington, a tall, handsome youth of twenty-three years; Governor Shirley of Massachusetts; the famous Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Governor De Lancey of New York; Governor Dobbs of North Carolina; Governor Sharpe of Maryland; General Braddock; Colonel Gage and many others, equally prominent.

Colonel Johnson introduced Jim, and spoke in high terms of his services to the colonies. Then the young woodsman was questioned concerning the Mohawks. He spoke in a quiet, forceful manner that made a striking impression upon his audience. When he had given his testimony he immediately withdrew from the conference with Kichkinet.

"Mr. Mason, you have made a most favorable impression," Colonel Johnson told him, some hours later. "General Braddock has asked me to relinquish you for his service. It

is a rare compliment, for I am led to believe that the English general has little confidence in any but trained regular troops. Do you care to serve him?"

The proposal was so unexpected that Jim was astonished into silence. It was some moments before he was able to reply.

"Why, sir, I scarcely know what to say," he said, finally. "Has it actually come to war between the French and ourselves?"

"Yes, Mr. Mason, there is no other way out of the difficulty," Colonel Johnson declared, soberly. "The French have ignored our appeals and treated our demands with scornful contempt. They have established themselves far within our territory, and they refuse to withdraw. Now we have resolved to resort to force to drive them beyond our borders. It may prove to be a difficult and costly undertaking, and each of us must be willing to offer himself for the service of the colonies.

"General Braddock has determined to strike a crushing blow against our foes, and to that end it has been decided to divide the forces of the colonies into four separate commands. General Braddock with the troops now under his command will move against Fort Duquesne; Governor Shirley will lead an expedition

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against the French fort at Niagara; a strong force from the New England colonies, under Lieutenant Colonel Moncton, will be sent to subdue Acadia; and I have been honored with the command of an expedition against the forts at Crown Point. General Braddock will be the first to move. He has little doubt of his ability to capture or destroy Duquesne within a few hours after the attack.

"Mr. Mason, if you accept service with General Braddock I believe you will find an opportunity to render valuable service to the colonies, and at the same time win further distinction and honor for yourself."

"My only desire, sir, is to faithfully serve the colonies," said Jim. "In what capacity does General Braddock desire me to serve him?"

"He desires your services as a scout, to keep him advised of the movements of the French and their Indians."

Jim was silent.

"I should prefer to serve you, sir, in the same capacity," he said, finally.

"Aye, my lad, and that you may," Colonel Johnson declared, heartily. "However, there is much to be done before I shall be ready to advance against Crown Point. It may be many weeks or even months before the advance

is actually begun. In the meantime General Braddock will have taken Duquesne. As soon as he receives the necessary number of horses and wagons, which have been slow in arriving, he will begin his march. However, Mr. Franklin has agreed to make a personal appeal to the people of Pennsylvania, and I feel certain that it will be but a short time before the shortage of animals and vehicles will be overcome. When you have completed your work for General Braddock, I shall expect you to render similar service for me. Mr. Mason, you may be assured that I shall make it plain to General Braddock that I shall relinquish my claim upon your services only with the understanding that I may call you the moment I need you."

"Then, sir, I shall be glad to offer my services to General Braddock," said Jim.

"Good," declared Colonel Johnson. "I shall advise him of your decision. And now, Kichkinet, will you return to your people or remain here with Achawi?"

"Great Chief, I will stay here with my brother," Kichkinet replied, quickly.

CHAPTER VIII

FORT CUMBERLAND

THREE days later Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon took their departure on the ship with Captain Barker. For an instant Jim was depressed and homesick as he watched the vessel move slowly down the river. Kichkinet, too, looked after it in gloomy silence. Both remained silent. Then they were suddenly roused by the voice of Dick Clayborne, the Virginian.

"Mr. Mason, I'm mighty glad you all are going to join us in our efforts against the French," he said.

"Thank you," replied Jim.

"Won't you and your friend share our quarters?" asked Clayborne.

"Gladly, if you have room," said Jim.

"Yes; we can squeeze in two more cots, and I believe you will find us as congenial as the regulars," laughed Clayborne.

"I am sure of that," Jim told him.

However, the following day General Brad-

dock sent orders for all of them to report at Fort Cumberland, which was several day's journey up the river.

"Well, I'd sooner be where there is a chance for a little action," declared Clayborne.

"Here, too," agreed Carroll.

"Tell me about Fort Cumberland," said Jim.

"It really is not much of a fort," explained Clayborne. "It was one of the posts maintained by the Ohio Company. When the French threatened trouble, our people transformed the old trading post into a fort. It is our outpost. Sort of a base from which we keep a watchful eye on the French. I believe General Braddock plans to move his army there as soon as he has secured the necessary supplies and equipment."

Early the next day they set out on their journey. They followed the Potomac through a great primeval forest of hardwoods in which Jim and Kichkinet immediately felt at home. Game was abundant, and late in the day Jim killed a young turkey cock which they broiled over the embers of the evening fire.

For several days they traveled leisurely on their way, and Jim learned considerable about his companions. The three Virginians soon showed that they were experienced and expert

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woodsmen, and Jim found them splendid comrades. In the friendly, intimate talks about the camp fire he learned that Dick Clayborne and George Bradford had served with Colonel Washington the previous year in his disastrous encounter with the French. Robert Carroll had served for three years as a scout along the Virginia border, and was thoroughly familiar with the savage methods of wilderness warfare. Jim told of his experiences with the Mohawks, and Kichkinet was made to play a prominent and heroic part in the narrative of their adventures in the northern wilderness.

Then they came in sight of Fort Cumberland. A large square clearing had been made in the heart of the forest, and the fort and auxiliary buildings, surrounded by a high log stockade, were situated on the crest of a low knoll.

"Here we are," Clayborne cried gayly, as they emerged from the woods.

Several men who were at work near the fort turned to watch them, and a number of blue coated soldiers appeared from the stockade. Clayborne waved his cap, and called reassuringly.

"Friends," he shouted.

The men at the fort appeared suspicious. It was evident that they had failed to recognize

him. They watched sharply as Clayborne and his companions advanced across the stumpy clearing. As they drew near the fort, a tall bearded man in buckskins came to meet them.

"Well, well; this a grand surprise," he said. "Dick Clayborne, howdy do; and George Bradford, you rascal; and, bless my eyes, here is good old Bob Carroll. Come right along; the boys shore will be glad to see you all."

"Tom Dale, I certainly am glad to see you," Clayborne said, heartily. "Shake hands with my friend, James Mason, from the north, and Kichkinet, a famous Mohawk scout."

"Glad to know you," said Dale, as he glanced closely at the Mohawk.

They were forced to stop at the stockade to greet their friends. Then they entered the inclosure and made their way toward the fort. It was a small two-storied building of logs, with portholes. Several other log buildings were grouped about it. One appeared to be the barracks, and the others store houses and work shops. There was a watch tower and a small cannon at each corner of the stockade. Several other cannons were placed in the open space about the fort.

"We have come under orders from General Braddock, and we wish to report to Captain

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Wyatt," Clayborne told the sentinel at the fort.

"You will find Captain Wyatt in his quarters," the sentinel told him.

They passed into the fort, and found the officer in a small room at one end of the building. He was a young man of aristocratic appearance, with a jolly tanned face and sharp blue eyes. He wore the blue uniform of the Virginia militia, high polished riding boots, and a black three-cornered hat. His hair was powdered and worn in a queue. He turned from his writing as Clayborne knocked at the open door.

"Come in," he said.

"Good even', Captain Wyatt," said Clayborne.

"Why, Clayborne, I am indeed glad to see you," he cried. "And George Bradford, and Bob Carroll."

He paused and looked closely at Jim and Kichkinet.

"Captain Wyatt, this gentleman is James Mason, who has served Colonel Johnson on the northern frontiers. This young warrior is his friend and comrade, Kichkinet, the son of a famous Mohawk chief."

"I am very glad to know you, sir," the offi-

cer said, as he offered his hand to Jim, and bowed to the Mohawk.

“General Braddock has instructed me to deliver this letter into your hands,” said Clayborne, as he passed a sealed document.

The officer broke the seal, and read slowly. When he had finished he glanced at Jim and the Mohawk.

“Mr. Mason, General Braddock speaks highly of your courage and ability,” he said.

Jim flushed at the compliment.

“Clayborne, I asked General Braddock to send you here so that I may be better informed of the activities and intentions of the French at Duquesne. Of late they have been rather active. Tom Dale has discovered their scouts within a day’s journey of the fort. While I do not anticipate an actual attack, I believe it may be well to take precautions.

“And now, Clayborne, if you will take your friends to the barracks, I believe you will find quarters. To-morrow I shall give you instructions.

“Very good, Captain Wyatt,” replied Clayborne.

They left the fort and went to the barracks. It was a long one-storied building of logs. The single room was provided with double tiers of

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bunks similar to those at Fort Johnson. Many of the bunks appeared to be unoccupied, and Jim was surprised at the weakness of the garrison. He had expected to find many more troops.

"The fort does not appear to be very strongly garrisoned," he told Clayborne.

"No," replied Clayborne. "You see, as I have already explained, it really is little more than an outpost. When it was decided to make the place the rendezvous for the troops of General Braddock, a company of provincial militia was sent here to make preparations. They have been here throughout the winter, and it was they who transformed the trading post into the present fort, and cleared the adjacent land. They have also cut a road some distance into the woods, in the direction of Duquesne. Now everything appears to be in readiness for General Braddock and his troops.

"Mr. Mason, there has been blundering, and it has caused a perilous and costly delay. If the French have learned of our intentions, and I fear they have, they have had time to strengthen the garrison at Duquesne, and make our task a difficult one."

"What has caused the difficulty?" Jim inquired, curiously.

“Bungling; inexcusable bungling,” declared Clayborne. “In the first place General Braddock and his regulars should have gone directly to Pennsylvania. He not only would have been very much nearer his goal, but he would have found far less difficulty in securing his equipment and supplies.”

“How so?” inquired Jim.

“For the reason that the population of Pennsylvania is composed very largely of farmers, almost all of whom raise large crops and own horses and wagons. At present that province also has a monopoly of the freight traffic, and many large caravans with hundreds of horses and great canvas topped wagons pass over its highways each day. If proper provision had been made it might have been possible to have secured most of them for the use of General Braddock.

“In our own province, circumstances are quite different. Most of our people are planters, engaged in the production of tobacco. As the crop is largely cultivated by hand, horses and especially wagons are scarce and difficult to procure. In like manner, there is little produce and still less live stock raised for trade. For these reasons General Braddock has found it almost impossible to secure the necessary

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transportation facilities and supplies for his troops."

"I understand," said Jim.

A few moments later Clayborne went to join his friends, and Jim and Kichkinet were left to themselves. Then they, too, left the barracks. The sun had already disappeared behind a high pine clad ridge to the westward, and the day was almost at an end. A fire burned briskly in the center of the stockaded inclosure, and a number of men were busily engaged preparing the evening mess. Little groups of soldiers loitered about the fort. Jim saw Clayborne talking with Tom Dale, the scout. Then a bugle sounded the mess call, and the men moved toward the fire.

"Mohawk, it is time to eat," said Jim.

They joined the company, and Clayborne and his friends sat beside them. Jim found the Virginia militiamen quite as companionable as the men at Fort Johnson, and he soon entered heartily into the spirit of jolly comradeship that pervaded the meal. When they had finished eating the men assembled about the fire, and sang their songs. The melodies were far different from the rollicking songs of the wilderness which Jim had heard at Fort Johnson, for the Virginians sang the soft, crooning negro

melodies which they had learned in childhood from the slaves on the plantations.

Then, as darkness settled upon the camp, a sudden hush fell upon the company, and the men became serious and thoughtful. They gathered in little groups and talked soberly. Several left the company and went to the gate of the stockade. They returned with serious faces.

"Any news?" their comrades inquired, anxiously.

They shook their heads.

"Anything wrong?" Jim asked Clayborne.

"A sergeant and two soldiers are missing," the Virginian told him. "They went hunting early to-day to secure meat for the garrison, and they have failed to return."

At that moment Tom Dale joined them.

"Boys, it shore looks bad," he said. "I fear those fellows have met with trouble. Only two days back I found fresh moccasin tracks along the river, about three leagues above the fort."

"Perhaps they have lost their way," Clayborne suggested, hopefully.

"It's not likely," said Dale. "Sergeant Harvey knows the country, and all three of them were raised at the edge of the woods. No,

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Dick, I believe something has happened to them."

"We must try to find them," declared Clayborne.

"We can't do much before daylight," Dale told him.

"Which way did they go?" inquired Carroll.

"They crossed the river to hunt along the ridges; the canoe is over there on the shore," replied Dale.

"We will set out to look for them at daylight," said Clayborne.

For some moments they sat in silence. Then Kichkinet turned, and spoke earnestly to Jim. The latter appeared interested. When the Mohawk finished, Jim nodded approval.

"My friends, the Mohawk desires to speak," he said. "Will you hear him?"

"Yes, indeed," said Clayborne.

"Mohawk, tell my brothers how you feel about this thing," Jim told Kichkinet.

"My friends, I believe it would be foolish to wait until the light comes," Kichkinet told them. "If the French have caught your brothers, I believe they will take them to the French camp. I believe they will travel along the river. Perhaps they will stop to rest until the light comes. Then they will go ahead. If

you wait for the new day it will be hard to come up with them. If you go now perhaps you will catch them before they go ahead again."

"I believe the Mohawk has the right idea," declared Carroll.

"It shore sounds reasonable," agreed Dale.

"It is the only thing to do," Clayborne told them. "Come, let's be on our way. Mr. Mason, will you and the Mohawk join us?"

"I shall be glad to go," said Jim. "Kichkinet, will you go?"

"I will go," replied Kichkinet.

"Good," cried Dale. "I'll go to the fort, and tell Captain Wyatt what we propose to do."

He soon returned and told them that Captain Wyatt had approved the plan, and given him a pass from the fort.

"However, boys, he has sort of spoiled the party," said Dale. "He says he doesn't wish to lose all his scouts at once. He appears to think that four of us will make a big enough meal for the French and their Injuns. George, you and Bob have been ordered to remain at the fort."

"Luck is against us, Bob," Bradford said, gloomily.

"And to think that for weeks I've been wishing for a little excitement," cried Carroll.

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“Bless me, Bob, you’ve had more than your share, already,” declared Dale. “Why, man, you had enough action along the border to last a lifetime. However, don’t you all go to worrying, for I believe before we’re through with the French there’ll be plenty of action for all of us.”

Shortly afterward the four scouts left the fort, and made their way to the river where they stopped to discuss the plan of action. Tom Dale was made the leader.

“Now, boys, we all have got to figure this thing out a bit,” he said. “If those fellows have fallen into the grip of the French, it appears probable that they’ve been taken up the river. But which side of the river are they likely to be on? That’s the big question. Anyway, we will travel faster and quieter if we take to canoes. We’ll divide up into two parties. Then we’ll move along *both* sides of the river. If we stumble upon the French, we’ll signal to one another. Let the signal be the call of the barred owl, given three times, then a pause, and then three times more. Mason, I presume you and the Mohawk can make the call.”

Kichkinet called softly, and the imitation was perfect.

"Good enough, Mohawk, and better than I can do," laughed Dale.

They found a number of canoes along the shore, and they carried two to the river.

"Mason, you and the Mohawk take one canoe and follow along this side of the river," said Dale.

"Good," agreed Jim.

"Dick and I will cross the river and move along the other shore. You all wait here until we've had a chance to get over. When you hear something that may sound a little like a fox yapping, go ahead."

"I understand," replied Jim.

Then Dale and Clayborne entered the canoe, and paddled away into the darkness, and Jim and Kichkinet seated themselves to wait for the signal. It was some time before they heard it. Then, from across the river, sounded the quick, husky yapping of the little gray fox.

"Come," said Jim, as he led the way to the canoe.

Kichkinet, as usual, seated himself in the bow of the canoe, and they paddled rapidly up the river. Jim was armed with his rifle, but the Mohawk relied upon his bow and arrows. Both, however, carried tomahawks and knives.

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"Kichkinet, the French have many Indians," Jim told the Mohawk.

"Hurons," the Mohawk said, savagely.

"Yes; I know about them, but there are others."

"Shawnees, Lenapes, Mingoos, Ojibwas," said Kichkinet.

Jim kept silent. He believed that the Shawnees and the Lenapes, or Delawares, might have been won for the English if the latter had showed them the same consideration which they had received from the French. Instead, the English provinces had treated them with indifference and contempt. It was only because of the tireless efforts of Colonel Johnson, and the intense hatred which they had for the French, that the Mohawks and their warlike tribesmen to the westward had remained faithful to the English. Jim took keen satisfaction in the thought that he, too, had played a prominent part in securing the allegiance of the Mohawks for the war against the French.

His meditations were suddenly interrupted by the sound of something moving cautiously through the woods along the shore. Jim put away his paddle and seized his rifle. Then they watched and listened. It seemed unlikely that they had come upon their enemies so soon,

but they determined to take precautions. In a few moments they again heard what appeared to be soft, cautious footfalls passing near the edge of the water.

"Na-o-geh," Kichkinet said, finally.

It was the Mohawk name for deer. At that instant two large green eyes stared at them from the edge of the woods. Then they heard a loud, startled snort, and a moment afterward the deer bounded away into the night.

"Well, Mohawk, that means there is no one close by," said Jim.

"It is true," replied Kichkinet.

They resumed their way up the river. Then, as the night wore on and they neither heard nor saw anything to indicate that French scouts were in the vicinity, Jim began to doubt that the sergeant and his companions had fallen into the hands of their enemies.

"Mohawk, I am beginning to believe that those men lost their way," he said. "Perhaps they have already returned to the fort."

"It may be true," agreed Kichkinet.

They had barely ceased speaking when they heard the owl call on the other side of the river. They ceased paddling, and listened anxiously. Three times the call echoed weirdly across the water, and then all was still. Several moments

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passed, and they waited in trying suspense. Then the call was repeated.

"They have found the French!" Jim said, excitedly.

They turned the canoe, and paddled toward the other side of the river. As they drew near the shore they became more cautious. They waited a long time to discover the glow from a fire, or hear the sound of voices. There was nothing, however, to give them a clew. Then they attempted to locate Dale and Clayborne. Slowly, noiselessly, they paddled along in the heavy shadows from the forest. At last a long black object loomed up out of the night, and they suddenly found themselves beside the other canoe.

"Speak easy," whispered Dale.

"Have you found them?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"Don't know," Dale told him. "We heard something that sounded like the sharp pop of a smouldering log. Then we thought we smelled smoke. We can't see any signs of a fire. Maybe it has died out."

"Where did you hear those sounds?" inquired Jim.

"A long rifle shot ahead of us."

They spent some time listening for further

sounds from the forest, but the silence was unbroken. At last they paddled cautiously up the river. When they were near the spot where they had heard the noise, Dale stopped, and whispered his instructions.

"Let the Mohawk go ashore and snoop around some," he said. "There's no one like an Injun for that job."

Jim told Kichkinet.

"I will go," the Mohawk said, quietly.

They paddled to the shore, and Kichkinet stepped from the canoe and vanished into the night. They listened sharply, but he disappeared without a sound. It was a long time before he returned. Then he suddenly appeared as silently as he had gone.

"I have found them," he said.

"How many?" Dale asked, eagerly.

"Six white men; two Indians," replied Kichkinet. "The fire is dead. They are all asleep."

"Good," said Clayborne.

"Come; there is not a moment to waste," Dale told them.

They left the canoes, and followed Kichkinet into the woods. Jim kept close behind him. When they had gone a bowshot, the Mohawk stopped.

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"They are near; we must be cautious," he warned.

He led them to a small opening in timber. Then he stopped, and pointed into the clearing. His companions gathered about him.

"There they are," he whispered.

They saw a number of indistinct black forms upon the ground. It was impossible to distinguish them.

"We can't tell friend from foe," said Dale. "We'll have to wait for daylight."

They seated themselves at the edge of the clearing to await the dawn. It was a long and tedious wait. Daylight seemed very slow in arriving. At last, however, the darkness gradually faded into a soft, misty twilight that made it possible to recognize their friends. The three militiamen were lying beside one another, and all of them were bound. Two Indians and three white men were near them. All appeared to be sleeping soundly.

"Come, boys, pick your man," whispered Dale.

They moved forward into the clearing, and advanced stealthily upon their foes. One of the militiamen awakened and raised his head. He stared at them in wide-eyed astonishment. Dale placed his finger across his lips, and the

militiaman sank back. Jim and Clayborne approached the white men, and Dale and Kichkinet moved toward the Indians. They had almost reached them, when one of the Indians awakened and saw them. He yelled to arouse his companions, and grabbed wildly for his bow. Before he could string his arrow, Kichkinet sprang forward with upraised tomahawk and struck him to the ground. Dale hurled himself upon the other Indian, and soon choked him into submission. As the white men sat up in bewildered astonishment, they saw Jim and Clayborne staring at them over the sights of their rifles.

“Don’t move,” Jim commanded, sharply.

At that moment Dale left the helpless Indians in charge of Kichkinet, and went to join Jim and Clayborne. The Canadians looked helplessly at one another, but remained silent. Their own rifles and those of the militiamen were close beside them, but they knew that it meant death to attempt to seize them.

“Clayborne, get the guns,” said Dale. “Strangers, if you make one move before I tell you, we’ll shoot to kill.”

One of the men spoke quickly to his companion.

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"Take care," warned Dale. "No tricks; we mean business."

"I only tell heem wat you say," replied the Canadian half-breed. "He no spak de Ang-leesh."

"All right," said Dale. "Go ahead, Clayborne."

The Virginian advanced and secured the rifles. The three militiamen raised a cheer.

"Good boy; now give it to 'em," they shouted.

"Go over and free those fellows," Dale told Clayborne. "Mason and I will watch these men."

"How did you do it?" inquired Sergeant Harvey, as Clayborne freed him from his bonds.

"I'll tell you later," said Clayborne.

Dale sent two of the militiamen to guard the Indians who were slowly regaining consciousness.

"Here, bring over those buckskin thongs, and we'll give these fellows some of their own medicine," he told Clayborne.

As Dale covered the prisoners with his rifle, Jim and Clayborne went behind them and tied their wrists. Then the Indians were bound and led forward to join their unhappy companions.

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“They’re Potawattomies,” said Dale.

“They have two canoes hidden along the river,” Sergeant Harvey told him.

“Good,” cried Dale. “Now we can take the whole outfit to the fort.”

CHAPTER IX

AN AWKWARD SITUATION

FOR several long, tedious weeks after the adventure on the Potomac, Jim and his fellow scouts loitered at Fort Cumberland with little to do. They were sent out on a number of short expeditions to look for the French, but the latter appeared to be keeping at a safe distance from the English fort. However, Captain Wyatt gained considerable information from the prisoners whom Jim and his companions had captured. Thus the days dragged along while the militiamen grumbled at the delay in advancing against Duquesne, and wondered what detained General Braddock at Alexandria.

"We are losing valuable time," declared Clayborne.

"It is unfortunate," said Jim.

Then, at the end of a bright May day, the little garrison was thrown into a commotion by the shrill notes of fifes and the loud beating of drums. Captain Wyatt hastily assembled the

militiamen. As they marched from the stockade they saw a great mass of troops appearing from the woods. At the front of the column rode General Braddock with Colonel Washington and several other aides. They were followed by two regiments of English regulars, and after them came several companies of Virginia militia, and the artillery. A long line of baggage wagons and pack horses brought up the rear. The soldiers advanced with bands playing and flags flying, and Jim thrilled at the sight.

As General Braddock halted his troops in the clearing before the fort, Captain Wyatt and his lieutenants went out to meet him. They exchanged official greetings, and then General Braddock and his staff rode to the fort. A cannon boomed as they neared the stockade, the militiamen presented arms, and bugles sounded the salute.

Jim and Kichkinet looked on with interest, as the great assemblage of troops prepared to make camp. There was considerable confusion, and it was apparent that the English regulars were little more familiar with the orderly methods of bivouacking in the open than the inexperienced militiamen of the provinces. For a time troops, artillery and baggage train were

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thrown together in one great intricate jumble. At last, however, the officers gained control and restored order. Then each division of troops was assigned to its particular camp site, and the work of encamping was begun. The clearing became the center of bustling activity. The cannons and baggage wagons were drawn up in orderly array, and the horses were unharnessed and tied to stout picket ropes that had been stretched around the borders of the clearing. The tents were taken from the wagons, and squads of soldiers raised them in place. Within a short time the clearing was white with them. Axmen labored at the edge of the forest to provide wood for the fires. Teamsters carried forage to their horses. The cooks began preparations for the evening meal. By the time darkness fell the great camp was in order, and sentinels were patrolling their posts.

The following day Croghan, a famous Indian trader, arrived with a company of fifty Iroquois warriors. Most of them were Oneidas, and all were painted for war. They made their camp beyond the soldiers at the edge of the woods, and Jim and the Mohawk went to inspect them. They were tall, powerful men who made a favorable impression, and Jim believed they would render valuable service to General Braddock.

Many of the soldiers, particularly the English regulars, looked upon them with contempt and derision. Unfamiliar with the significance of the facial markings, and the gayly decorated scalp-locks, they found much to amuse them, and laughed insultingly at the dignified warriors who had come to aid them.

"Bless me," cried an English sergeant. "They look fierce enough, but I'll warrant the first shot will send 'em scamperin' through the woods like rabbits."

"You are greatly mistaken," Jim told him.

The soldier smiled scornfully.

"Friends of yours?" he inquired, mockingly.

"They are," Jim answered, quickly.

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders, and turned away.

General Braddock treated the Oneidas with more respect. He invited the chiefs to his quarters, ordered the cannons fired in their honor, and compelled the guard to salute them. On the following day he sent a large consignment of provisions to their camp for a feast.

At sunset the Oneidas began their celebration. A fire was lighted in the center of their camp, and the beef which General Braddock had provided was broiled over the glowing embers. Then the warriors seated themselves

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in a great circle and began to eat. Jim and Kichkinet sat with Croghan, the trader. He was a short, powerful man with long black hair and a heavy beard. He was dressed in buckskins, and wore a fur cap.

"Mason, I knew your father," he told Jim. "He had great power with the Mohawks."

"So Colonel Johnson has told me," replied Jim.

"Yes, your father stood high in the opinion of Ha-yo-went-ha and his people."

"Then you know them," said Jim.

"I know 'em all," declared Croghan. "I never traded much with the Mohawks, but I've been to their villages many times. Most of my tradin' has been done with the tribes farther to the westward; the Oneidas, and Onondagas and Senecas."

"How do those people feel toward us?" Jim inquired, eagerly.

"Some of 'em are leanin' toward the French," Croghan told him. "They're tryin' hard to win 'em, and maybe they'll succeed."

"Perhaps our own people are at fault," said Jim.

"Thar's no doubt of that," agreed Croghan. "I've seen some sharp tricks played on those Injuns."

At that moment one of the Oneidas rose to address his companions. He was a tall well-proportioned man of middle age, and Jim noted that one side of his face was badly disfigured.

"That man is Broken Face; he's the leader of this war party," Croghan told Jim. "Some years ago he got mixed up with a bear, and lost part of his face in the fight."

As the Oneida began to speak, Kichkinet translated his words.

"My brothers, we have eaten the food which the great white chief sent here for us," he said. "We know that his heart is good for us. Now I am glad we came here to help him fight his enemies. It is a great war party. Look about you. The lodges of the white men are everywhere. The white chief has many warriors. My brothers, none of them are braver than the Oneidas. Come, we will dance the war dance, and sing the war songs to show our white brothers that our hearts are strong."

Fresh fuel was placed upon the fire, and as it burst into flame the warriors formed in a circle and began to dance. Carrying their weapons, they circled slowly about the fire, chanting the war songs and stepping in time with the music.

As the wild, thrilling strains of the war songs echoed through the camp, the troops hurried to

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the spot to witness the ceremony. Then General Braddock and his officers appeared. His arrival was the signal for an outburst of yells and war cries from the Oneidas, and a perfect bedlam of sound rang through the camp as the frenzied dancers capered about the fire in the violent antics of the war dance.

It was a wild and fascinating scene—the excited Oneidas leaping frantically about the roaring fire, the picturesque assemblage of serious spectators, the white, shadowy forms of the tents in the clearing, and about it all the towering wall of grim black forest.

Then, as the Oneidas reached the height of their enthusiasm, a shrill, piercing shout rose above the din and echoed defiantly through the night. All instantly recognized it as the war cry—a bold challenge from unseen foes. The Oneidas were astonished into silence. The white men turned to one another with alert, serious faces. Several moments passed. Then the challenge was repeated. A moment afterward it was followed by a wild, taunting laugh. The sounds came from the fort.

“To arms, to arms!” shouted an excited officer. “The French and their Indians are upon us!”

General Braddock and his officers hurried

toward the fort. Most of the soldiers rushed after them. Tom Dale, the scout, smiled and shook his head.

"Thar's nothin' to get anxious about," he said. "It's those Injuns we caught along the river. They're showin' the Oneidas how brave they are."

"I believe that is exactly who it is," agreed Jim.

"It is bad," Kichkinet said, soberly. "When my people find out about it they will be very mad. Perhaps they will go to the fort and kill those prisoners."

"Yes, son, I smell trouble brewin'," declared Croghan.

Broken Face, the Oneida war leader, had already approached Kichkinet. They were talking earnestly. Jim and his companions watched them with considerable uneasiness. They saw the face of the Oneida cloud with anger. Then he turned to his companions.

"What did he say?" Jim asked, anxiously.

"He is very mad," replied Kichkinet.

"Clayborne, Clayborne," called Tom Dale.

The Virginian hastened to him.

"Go to the fort and tell Captain Wyatt to assemble the troops," said Dale. "Those fool Pottawattomies have started trouble. The

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Oneidas may try to break into the fort and kill them."

"I shall warn Captain Wyatt," said Clayborne.

Broken Face was talking excitedly to his companions.

"Tell me his words," Jim told Kichkinet.

"He is telling his brothers about those Indians," said Kichkinet. "He says they are our enemies. He says they have laughed at the Oneidas. Achawi, Broken Face says those Indians must die."

As Broken Face ceased speaking, the Oneidas raised their voices in a savage shout that rang ominously through the night and carried a sinister warning to those at the fort. Then they began to sing their war songs, and utter fierce threats against the boastful Pottawattomies. Broken Face turned to the little group of scouts.

"My brothers, Kichkinet has told me about those boastful Pottawattomies who are tied up in your fort," he said. "They are our enemies. Your great chief should have told us about them. We would have brought them here and showed you how the Oneidas kill their enemies. Now we are going to ask your people to give us

those Pottawattomies. Then we will bring them here and let you see how brave they are."

The white men remained silent. They realized that a perilous emergency had arisen, and they were trying to think of a way out of the difficulty. Confident that the officers at the fort would refuse to surrender the captives, they feared that the refusal might arouse the anger of the Oneidas and lead to a clash with the troops.

"Kichkinet, talk to your brothers and tell them that the white chief will punish the boastful Pottawattomies," Jim said, eagerly.

Kichkinet turned to the enraged Oneidas, and Croghan interpreted his words.

"My brothers, I am a Mohawk," he said. "The great chief Ha-yo-went-ha is my father. Most of you know him. The Oneidas and the Mohawks have the same mother and the same father. We are brothers. Your enemies are my enemies.

"Now, my brothers, listen sharp to what I am about to say. I went up the river with my brother Achawi, and some white men, and we caught those Pottawattomies. We did not try to kill them. We brought them to the fort, and gave them to our white brothers. They wish to let them live so that they can find out about

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the French, It is good. Pretty soon you will be able to kill many enemies. Wait, my brothers. Leave those foolish Pottawattomies with the white chief. If you try to take them the white chief will be very mad. I have spoken."

The Oneidas received his words in silence. Jim and his companions watched fearfully. They read disappointment and anger on the faces of the Oneidas. Broken Face was talking earnestly to his warriors. Kichkinet waited calmly for their decision.

"What is he saying," Jim asked Croghan.

"He's talkin' against it," the trader replied, solemnly. "It looks bad."

It was evident that the Oneidas indorsed the words of their leader. He turned to Kichkinet. Croghan translated his words.

"My brother, we have listened to your talk, but it sounds like the talk of the white men," declared Broken Face. "We will not do what you ask us to do. We are going to the fort to get those Pottawattomies. They have laughed at us. Well, my brother, pretty soon you will hear them scream and cry like women."

Then the entire company advanced toward the fort, shouting fiercely, and singing the war songs. Jim and the scouts hurried on in ad-

vance of the Oneidas. They heard the shrill blast of a bugle, and a moment afterward two large fires blazed up near the entrance to the stockade. The fort and its surroundings were brightly illuminated. Several companies of soldiers stood at ease before the stockade. The garrison appeared prepared for an emergency. Jim believed it was a fatal blunder. The Oneidas stopped, a bowshot from the troops, and looked upon them with angry eyes. Then Captain Wyatt and several other officers went to meet them. Broken Face confronted them.

"My brothers, is this the way you welcome your friends?" he asked, angrily. "Where is your great chief?"

"He is waiting to see you," Captain Wyatt told him. "He has sent me here to take you to him."

"Good," said the Oneida.

They passed the troops and entered the stockade. Jim took advantage of the delay to move among the troops, and caution them against rousing the temper of the Oneidas. Many of them treated the warning with scornful contempt.

"Do you suppose we're afraid of a lot of painted heathens?" an English sergeant inquired, angrily. "If I had my way I'd give 'em

those two villains in the fort, and then drive the whole pack into the woods. These greenhorn militiamen are bad enough, but the savages are ten times worse. Neither of 'em are worth their rations. I can't see why the General bothers with 'em."

He was the man who had spoken sarcastically of the Oneidas the previous day, and Jim turned upon him in anger.

"I believe before long you will have good cause to change your opinion of both the provincial troops and their Indian allies," he said.

"Bah," the soldier cried, impatiently.

Shortly afterward Broken Face returned from the fort. He appeared disturbed and angry as he passed disdainfully among the troops and joined his companions. They gathered eagerly about him. Jim and Kichkinet went forward to hear his words.

"My brothers, the white chief has turned against us," he said. "He will not listen to my words. He will not give up the Pottawattomies. They are singing their war songs and laughing at us. See, the white chief has sent out his warriors. Perhaps he is trying to frighten us. Well, my brothers, we are Oneidas. Our hearts are strong. We are not afraid of all those white men. We came here to help

them. Now I see that we were very foolish. Come, we will go back to our people and tell them what has happened to us. I have spoken."

His words were received with approval. It was evident that the Oneidas failed to understand the motives of the white men. They interpreted the refusal to surrender the prisoners as a breach of loyalty on the part of the men whom they had come to aid, and they were humiliated and enraged. They could not understand why General Braddock and his officers desired to protect their enemies, and offend their friends. The idea was utterly irreconcilable with their own savage methods of wilderness warfare. It perplexed them and aroused their suspicions. They withdrew from the vicinity of the fort, and assembled in angry council about their fire.

In the meantime General Braddock had assembled his officers to discuss the emergency. Jim, Croghan and Kichkinet were invited to attend. General Braddock and a number of the English officers were inclined to consider the disaffection of the Oneidas as of slight importance. Colonel Washington and most of the provincial officers, however, spoke forcibly in favor of retaining the friendship and allegiance of those powerful allies.

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“Gentlemen, I fear that some of us may not realize the perilous possibilities of this unfortunate situation,” Jim told them. “The loss of this small force of Oneidas may not greatly impair the strength and efficiency of the expedition against Duquesne, although for my own part I believe their assistance would be invaluable. However, there is a far more serious possibility to be considered. As you are aware, the Oneidas are a strong and influential tribe of the great Iroquois Confederation. The powerful nations of that great league have been of inestimable service in protecting the settlements along our northern frontiers. They have stood like a mighty bulwark against the French and their Indian allies. Our enemies have made tireless and desperate efforts to turn these tribes against us. But a year since, I saw such an attempt made upon the Mohawks at Caughnawaga. Fortunately it was frustrated. Now that great tribe has formed an alliance with Colonel Johnson and the troops of the colonies.

“Gentlemen, if we refuse the assistance of these Oneidas, and permit them to depart from us in anger, I fear we shall soon find cause for regret. Few of us understand the ways of the Indians, and still fewer Indians understand

our ways. For that reason the slightest incident may lead to serious consequences. Perhaps this little company of offended Oneidas may exert an influence that will turn the other tribes of the League against us, and leave our northern settlements helplessly exposed to the devastating raids of our enemies.

“We are about to meet a powerful foe whose forces are largely composed of hardy Canadian voyageurs and Indians from the northern forests. They are skillful and crafty adversaries, accustomed to a life of hardship and peril, and particularly fitted for the savage methods of wilderness warfare. It is a style of fighting with which your English troops are entirely unacquainted. Some of the border troops of the provinces are familiar with its difficulties and perils. Our Indians, however, are well trained and expert in such methods of fighting, and I repeat my belief that they will render efficient and invaluable assistance in our efforts to drive the French from our domains. Therefore, gentlemen, I beg that you will consider carefully before you arouse the distrust and animosity of the Oneidas and their tribesmen.”

Jim made a strong and favorable impression upon his audience. His solemn warning carried conviction. He was instructed by General Brad-

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dock to go to the Oneidas, with Croghan and Kichkinet, and attempt to allay their anger and persuade them to remain with the troops.

Jim found the Oneidas sitting gloomily about their fire. They showed little interest as the white men approached. Croghan spoke to Broken Face, and, as the latter nodded, the three scouts seated themselves in the council circle. Jim had been appointed to act as spokesman, but he awaited the signal from Croghan, who had cautioned him to wait until the Oneidas were in a mood to listen. For some time they sat in silence, while the Oneidas passed several pipes from one to the other, but failed to offer them to the white men. It was a significant clew to their feelings. Then Croghan began to talk earnestly to Broken Face. The Oneida appeared cold and indifferent. However, when the trader finished speaking, Broken Face addressed his warriors. They talked quietly among themselves. Then one of them replied to Broken Face. A moment afterward the Oneida turned to Jim.

"Your brother says you have brought us the words of the white chief," he said, shortly. "We will listen."

Croghan nodded approval. Jim rose to address the council.

"My friends, I do not speak your tongue, but your brother, Broken Face, will give you my words," he said. "I am the son of Achawi, who was the friend of your brothers, the Mohawks. I believe some of you knew him. If you knew him, then you know that what he told you was true. The Mohawks are my brothers. I have lived in their lodges. I have smoked the peace pipe with those great people. I have talked at their councils. They have called me Achawi, he-who-settles-disputes. I have tried to help them. Now I wish to help you. I come before you with a good heart. I wish your people and my people to be friends.

"I have brought you the words of the white chief. He says his heart is good toward you. He says the Oneidas are very brave. He says you must go with him to fight the French. My friends, do not think about those foolish Pottawattomies. The white chief wishes to keep them so that he can fool the French. You are great warriors. You know it is the only thing to do. Oneidas, listen sharp to my words. Your brothers, the Mohawks, have sent the wampum belt to our people. They will send many warriors to help us. If you will help us we will drive away the French and their Indians and your people will live at peace. My people

are your friends. There will be no one to trouble you. You have come here to fight. Will you go back to your village like angry children? Come, Oneidas, you are men. Show my people that you have good hearts. I am Achawi, he-who-settles-disputes. Let it be so. Let me carry your words to the white chief. He is waiting."

Jim finished speaking, and waited anxiously for the reply from the Oneidas. They were talking excitedly, but their stern, impassive faces gave no clew to their thoughts. Both Croghan and Kichkinet, however, appeared hopeful. At last Broken Face announced the decision.

"Achawi, we will listen to your words," he said. "We will do what we have set out to do. We will go with your brothers to fight their enemies."

"My friends, you are very brave," Jim told him. "I will carry your words to the white chief."

"Well, son, that's what I call a real good job," Croghan said, admiringly, as they hastened toward the fort.

CHAPTER X

A GLOOMY PROPHECY

ANOTHER week passed while General Braddock lingered at Fort Cumberland to complete his preparations for the advance against Fort Duquesne. He expected additional supplies and equipment from Alexandria, and was unwilling to begin his march until they came. In the meantime he sent a large force of axmen into the wilderness to improve and extend the road which the militiamen had begun the previous year. He kept his officers busily engaged in drilling the troops, and maintained a strict discipline that greatly exasperated the provincials and frontiersmen. Twice each day the troops were assembled in the clearing before the fort for a formal and tedious parade and inspection.

“Such business is all nonsense,” declared Tom Dale. “Marchin’, an’ shoulderin’ muskets, and salutin’ is well enough for play, but we’re out for fightin’, an’ the sooner we get at it the quicker it’ll be over.”

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Then another small baggage train with supplies arrived, and two days later General Braddock issued orders to begin the long, perilous march to the French fort. The troops cheered wildly at the news. The thought of escaping from the monotonous routine at the fort, and going into action, filled them with enthusiasm.

"Hurrah, we're off at last!" cried Tom Dale.

"I shall be glad to go," Jim told him.

"You bet," Clayborne said, heartily.

At daylight the buglers sounded the assembly, and the camp was instantly astir. A hasty meal was served about the fires, and then the tents were taken down and loaded into the wagons; the horses were assembled and harnessed; and the troops were mustered for a final review. An hour later they marched away with bands playing and flags fluttering in the breeze. All were in high spirits, for they felt confident that they would easily overcome the French and capture Fort Duquesne. A little company of dejected militiamen remained at the fort, and cheered loyally as their more fortunate comrades disappeared into the forest.

It was an imposing spectacle. The scouts and Oneidas led the way. A company of axmen came after them to clear the road. Behind

them rode a troop of Virginia cavalry. They were followed by General Braddock and a regiment of English regulars. Then came the artillery, most of the provincial militia, and the long line of wagons and pack horses. A regiment of English troops and several companies of provincials formed the rear guard.

The entire force numbered more than two thousand troops, several hundred teamsters and helpers, about six hundred horses and more than a hundred baggage wagons. The latter were known as Conestoga wagons, and had been designed by the pioneers of Pennsylvania for the transportation of freight over the rough mountainous roads of the province. They were long, low, four wheeled vehicles, high at front and rear, and with a peculiar boatlike form which prevented the cargo from sliding on steep grades. They were provided with high gayly painted sides, and were arched over with six or eight bent saplings, over which was stretched a strong white hempen cover for protection against the weather. Each wagon had a carrying capacity of several tons, and was drawn by four powerful horses. The driver rode one of the wheel horses.

The road was rough and narrow, and the advance was slow and toilsome. Long delays

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were frequent, while men and horses labored desperately to raise the heavy cannons over the boulders, or free a baggage wagon that had mired in a bog hole. The dense forest shut out the breeze, and the men suffered greatly from the heat, and the swarms of flies and mosquitoes that were attracted by the sweating horses. When General Braddock ordered a halt at the end of the day, they were less than two leagues from Fort Cumberland.

“It’s slow goin’,” declared Tom Dale.

“Too slow,” agreed Clayborne. “At this rate it will take us all summer to reach Duquesne.”

Jim and Kichkinet soon left them, and went to join Croghan and the Oneidas. They were seated about their fire, some distance in advance of the troops. They appeared gloomy and depressed, and Jim wondered if the unpleasant incident at the fort still lingered in their minds. Jim and Kichkinet seated themselves in the circle, and were invited to partake of the pipes which were being passed. Aware that a refusal would give offense, Jim accepted the pipe and drew lightly upon it. Then he gave it to Kichkinet.

“Did you see any signs?” Croghan asked him.

"No," Jim told him. "Did you?"

"Some of the Oneidas found fresh moccasin tracks about a spring hole," said Croghan. "I shouldn't wonder if some of the French Injuns are keepin' watch on us."

"Do you believe they would venture so near the fort?" inquired Jim.

"You caught some of 'em as near as this," laughed Croghan.

"Yes; but I scarcely believe there are any more."

"You never can tell," declared the trader. "Maybe they've come scoutin' down here to find out what has happened to their friends."

"Yes, that may be so," agreed Jim.

The Oneidas had killed a fat yearling buck, and they were broiling the meat over the fire. Jim and Kichkinet were invited to partake of the feast. While they were eating, Broken Face, the Oneida war leader, seated himself beside them.

"My brothers, something bad has happened," he said, soberly.

Jim looked uneasily at Croghan. The trader frowned and nodded his head.

"To-day we saw the great war bird," continued Broken Face. "He was flying high up in the sky. Pretty soon he saw us, and came

lower. Then he circled around us, and began to make a great noise. It was not the war cry. It sounded like women screaming. He made that noise many times. Then he flew away toward our lodges."

Broken Face ceased speaking, and stared gloomily at the fire. Jim and Croghan exchanged glances, as they waited for the Oneida to resume his story.

"It is bad," he said, finally. "The great war bird is the friend of my people. He tells us when to go to war. He tells us where to find our enemies. He warns us of danger. Now I believe something bad is going to happen to us. He has made the sound of women crying. He has gone toward our lodges. I believe he was trying to make us turn back. I do not know what to make of it, but I believe it is a bad sign. My brothers are troubled about it. They say: 'Perhaps our people are in danger. The war bird has warned us. We must listen.' Many of them wish to return to their lodges. Now, my brothers, I have told you about this thing. You must watch out, for I believe something bad will come of it."

Jim and the trader kept silent. Both had lived long enough with the Indians to know that it would be folly to attempt to dissuade them

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from their superstitions. They realized, however, that another troublesome dilemma was at hand. While they were thinking about it, Broken Face left them and rejoined his companions.

“Kichkinet, what do you make of it?” Jim asked, anxiously.

“It is a bad sign,” declared the Mohawk.

Croghan shook his head, and smiled.

CHAPTER XI

SCOUTING

DAY after day the troops toiled slowly through the wilderness on their long journey to Fort Duquesne. It was exhausting, heartbreaking work for both men and horses. Once at the end of the rough wood road that had been prepared by the militiamen at Fort Cumberland, they were forced to hew their way through the virgin forest. The route extended through a rugged mountainous country that presented many difficulties. They bridged streams, dug great bowlders from the roadway, cut and dragged aside fallen trees, filled bog holes, floundered through treacherous swamps, and assisted the teams in dragging the cannons and baggage wagons over the steep, rock-strewn ridges. The heat was intense, and great swarms of flies and mosquitoes added to the misery. The troops, however, both English regulars and provincial militiamen, labored without complaint. The former had begun to realize that campaigning through the trackless

forests of America was a far more serious undertaking than they had anticipated.

A week passed before they finally reached a broad open clearing in which stood a deserted cabin. The spot was known as the Little Meadows, and was less than ten leagues from Fort Cumberland. General Braddock immediately ordered a halt. Many of the horses were utterly worn out, and sickness and fever had appeared among officers and men. Colonel Washington was so ill and weak that he could barely sit in the saddle. Food was getting low, and there was little forage for the horses. Many of the cannons and baggage wagons required repairs.

"We appear to be pretty well smashed up," Tom Dale declared, dejectedly.

"Yes; and the worst of it is that we have barely begun our journey," said Clayborne.

Jim kept silent. He knew little of the art of moving armies, and he believed that his opinion would be of slight value. Besides, he felt certain that both officers and men were doing their best under the trying circumstances. However, the sickness among the troops and the collapse of many of the horses filled him with misgivings. The solemn warning of Broken Face, the Oneida war leader, kept pass-

ing through his mind. That night as he and Kichkinet made their beds of spruce boughs and lay down to sleep, the Mohawk suddenly expressed the fears which were disturbing Jim.

"Achawi, I am thinking about the words of Broken Face," he said, soberly. "It is bad."

Roused to desperation by the difficulties of his march, and the slowness of the advance, General Braddock assembled his officers for a council. All advised speed, and warned of the peril of delay, but speed seemed impossible. Then Colonel Washington proposed that the force be divided; leaving the cumbersome baggage train, most of the artillery, and the incapacitated troops to follow, while General Braddock pushed forward with the able troops, a few cannons and baggage wagons, and a large string of pack animals. The other officers approved the plan, and General Braddock accepted it.

The following day the force was separated into two commands, and the rearguard division was left in charge of Colonel Dunbar. General Braddock with about twelve hundred men, and their officers, a small company of teamsters and woodsmen, the Oneidas, a number of cannons, thirty baggage wagons, and a large string of pack horses, resumed the toilsome march through the forest. Forty leagues of unbroken

wilderness lay before them. Slowly, doggedly, they toiled onward through the silent solitudes; passing along heavily timbered valleys, fording innumerable streams, climbing laboriously over the ridges, and at night dropping exhausted beside their crackling camp-fires. It was several weeks before they finally drew near their goal.

Then, at the end of a stifling July day, they arrived at Turtle Creek, a stream that joined the Monongahela River about three leagues from Fort Duquesne. General Braddock ordered a halt, and the tired troops prepared their bivouac for the night. As they were within close proximity to their enemies, they were cautioned against lighting the evening fires. When darkness settled upon the wilderness, the men sat close together, talking in cautious tones. The camp was surrounded with sentries, and the horses were strongly guarded against the possibility of a raid by hostile Indians.

"Well, Mohawk, we are close upon our enemies," Jim told Kichkinet.

"It is good," replied the Mohawk.

At daylight General Braddock ordered his scouts to reconnoiter toward the French fort. Jim, Kichkinet, Tom Dale and Clayborne were

chosen for the perilous mission. Led by Dale, who was familiar with the country, they went a considerable distance along the river, and then turned sharply toward the east.

"'Thar's a clearin' a short ways ahead," he said. "'Thar's also an old cabin on it that was built by Fraser, the trader. A good trail runs from Fraser's place clear to the fort. However, we'll not dare to follow it that far."

Within a short time they came in sight of the clearing. It was choked with a rank growth of weeds and saplings, and the low log cabin showed signs of decay. Dale stopped at the edge of the woods.

"'Thar's no tellin' who may be holed up in that old shanty; we'd best watch awhile," he cautioned.

They stood well within the timber and looked anxiously about the clearing. It was a lonely, isolated spot, closed in by a dense wall of forest and surrounded by low, heavily timbered hills. It appeared deserted and lifeless. Still, they determined to take precautions.

"'Waitin' is better than runnin'," declared Tom Dale.

"Yes, yes," laughed Clayborne.

They watched a long time, but saw nothing to arouse their suspicions. However, as they

were about to move cautiously along the edge of the woods, Kichkinet touched Jim's arm.

"Something is moving over there," he said, softly, as he pointed toward the other side of the clearing.

A moment afterward they saw the bushes tremble, and a brown form passed through the shadows. Another followed, and then a third. The scouts watched sharply.

"They may be deer," whispered Clayborne.

"You can't tell; they're just as likely to be Injuns," said Dale.

At that instant a cow elk and two calves appeared at the edge of the woods. The cow stood, with raised head, sniffing the breeze. The two long legged calves crowded behind her. In a few moments one of the calves ventured unsteadily into the open, but the cow quickly turned it back into the shadows. Then she again raised her nose into the wind. A moment afterward she thrust forward her great ears, and looked suspiciously across the clearing.

"She's winded us," said Dale. "Yes; thar they go."

Having scented danger, the elk and her calves retreated into the woods. For an instant only she stopped in the shadows to glance nervously

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over her shoulder, and then she disappeared.

"We all better move on," said Dale. "I'd sort of like to have a peep into that old cabin, just to make sure that no one is livin' thar. However, I consider it risky to show ourselves in the open."

"Let the Mohawk go," proposed Jim. "If he is seen he probably will be mistaken for one of the French Indians."

"That's a good idee," agreed Dale. "Mohawk, go over thar an' look inside of the cabin."

Kichkinet nodded, and started away.

"Wait," cautioned Dale. "Don't come back here. That might look bad. We'll move along the edge of the woods and meet you on the other side of the clearin'."

"It is good," said Kichkinet.

He left them and advanced toward the deserted cabin. They watched anxiously as he approached it. As he drew near the house, Kichkinet took several arrows from his quiver. Then he walked directly toward the open door. He was almost at the cabin when the sharp bark of a fox sounded from the side of a low ridge to the eastward. Kichkinet stopped and appeared to be listening.

"What's up?" Tom Dale inquired, uneasily.

JIM MASON, SCOUT

"Perhaps the Mohawk mistrusts the call," said Jim.

"It may be a signal," suggested Clayborne.

They waited in suspense until they again heard the sharp barking on the side of the ridge. Tom Dale shook his head.

"It shore sounds natural, but I don't like it," he declared. "It's the wrong season, an' the wrong time of day for foxes to bark."

"That is true," agreed Jim. "I fear it is a signal."

In the meantime Kichkinet had advanced to the cabin. He looked in at the open doorway.

At that instant the fox call again sounded from the ridge. This time Kichkinet replied to the signal. Three times he repeated the call. Then he faced the hillside, and raised his bow above his head. A moment afterward he turned toward the woods.

"The Mohawk is sharp," chuckled Clayborne. "He has fooled whoever is on that ridge."

"Maybe so, an' maybe not," said Dale. "Anyway, the sooner we get away from here the better it will be for us."

They moved rapidly along the edge of the woods until they met Kichkinet.

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"Mohawk, what do you make of it?" Jim asked him.

"Bad," said Kichkinet. "Scouts are on that hill. They saw me. Then they made that noise to find out about me. Perhaps I fooled them. I cannot tell about it. I believe we are in danger. We must watch out."

"What did you find at the cabin?" inquired Dale.

"It is empty," replied Kichkinet. "No one is living there."

For some moments Dale remained silent. He looked thoughtfully toward the ridge upon which they had heard the signal. His companions waited to learn his plans.

"Well, lads, it would be folly to follow the old road," he said, finally. "We'll climb to the top of that other ridge, an' move along until we come in sight of the fort."

"It is the best thing to do," agreed Kichkinet. "Perhaps those scouts will come down here to find out about this thing."

"I shouldn't wonder," Dale told him.

They made their way to the top of a low ridge that extended parallel with the road from the deserted cabin to the French fort. Once above the clearing, they obtained a splendid view of the surrounding country. A wild and fascina-

ting panorama lay before them. Below was the dark, brooding valley along which the road extended to Fort Duquesne. Beyond were several low, undulating pine clad ridges. Some distance farther west the Monongahela blazed its silvery trail through the somber shadows of the forest. Still farther away a misty range of jagged peaks rose majestically against the sky. Valleys, hills and mountains were held in the grip of the vast primeval wilderness.

"It certainly is a desolate country," declared Clayborne. "Nothing but woods, and mountains, and Indians."

"It is splendid," Jim told him.

"Well, thar's no time for lookin' around," Dale reminded them. "I'm a bit uneasy about those calls on the ridge. I believe we'd best keep movin'."

They traveled slowly along the top of the ridge, watching and listening for signs of their foes. Shortly before midday they came in sight of the French fort. Dale halted, and pointed into the valley.

"Thar she is," he said. "A nice location, an' mighty hard to get at."

They looked eagerly upon the goal toward which they had been toiling for long wearisome weeks. A broad clearing had been made in the

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forest, and the French fort was in the center. Two large rivers, the Monongahela and the Alleghany, flowed on either side of it. It was protected on two sides by a high log stockade, and on the other sides by strong ramparts of earth and bowlders. A number of buildings were grouped about the fort, and beyond the fortifications there were many bark huts. Close to the edge of the woods there appeared to be a great encampment of Indians.

The scouts were astonished at the strength of the garrison. There appeared to be many more troops than they had expected to find. Several companies of soldiers were marching on the open meadow before the fort. Men were moving about inside of the stockade. More men were gathered about the bark huts. A large force of Indians was assembled in their camp. It was apparent that the garrison had been strongly re-inforced while General Braddock and his troops were making their tedious march through the wilderness.

"Our delay may prove costly," Clayborne said, seriously. "I believe the French force is of equal strength with our own."

"Thar's more troops than I expected to see," said Dale.

They remained on the ridge for several hours

to watch the activity at the French fort. Then they set out to rejoin the troops at Turtle Creek.

"Achawi, there are many warriors in that camp," declared Kichkinet. "I believe it will be a great fight."

"General Braddock will soon drive them out," Jim replied, confidently.

They were almost at the abandoned clearing when they suddenly heard voices directly ahead of them. For an instant they stopped in dismay. Their foes were almost upon them, and discovery seemed certain. Then Jim pointed to a dense mass of fallen tree tops. They hurried noiselessly toward the shelter, and concealed themselves in the intricate tangle.

"It's a bad hidin' place," whispered Dale. "If they're suspicious they'll be likely to look into such places."

"If they find us-~" began Clayborne.

"Sh," cautioned Jim.

A careless footfall had snapped a brittle twig, and the sound proclaimed the approach of their foes. The scouts peered eagerly from their hiding place and saw four stalwart warriors advancing through the forest. They were within easy bowshot, and Kichkinet quickly recognized them.

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"Hurons," he whispered.

"Let them pass," cautioned Dale.

The Hurons were talking, and appeared entirely unsuspecting. Dale and his companions watched them in breathless suspense. Would they pass without noticing the hiding place? They were directly in front of it. Then one of the Hurons suddenly turned his head, and noted the tangle of tree tops. He stopped and called to his comrades.

"They've got us," whispered Clayborne.

Kichkinet drew an arrow from his quiver. Jim seized his arm. Dale scowled.

"Don't move," he cautioned.

The Hurons were talking and looking sharply at the hiding place. The four anxious scouts remained motionless, scarcely daring to breathe lest they might betray themselves to their enemies. Several perilous moments passed. Then the Hurons turned away, and disappeared among the trees.

It was some time before the scouts ventured to speak.

"A close call," Dale whispered, finally.

They remained in hiding a long time, fearful that the Hurons might be watching from cover. At last, however, they crawled from their hiding place and hurried away.

"Those are the bucks who saw the Mohawk," declared Dale.

"Yes, I believe so," agreed Jim.

Kichkinet nodded.

"I am wondering how much more they saw," said Clayborne. "Perhaps they have discovered our troops."

"Bless me, I hope not," Dale replied, uneasily. "That *would* be a fix."

The possibility filled them with alarm. They feared that if the French learned of the close proximity of General Braddock and his troops, they would take measures to impede and imperil his advance upon the fort.

"If those Hurons have seen our troops, we shall have a big job on our hands," said Clayborne. "The French might easily block the road to the fort, and send out a strong force of Canadians and Indians to catch us in a trap."

"Nothin' easier, if they know about us," agreed Dale. "I don't like the idea of those Injuns travelin' through the woods instead of along the road. It looks suspicious."

"Perhaps they were hunting," suggested Jim.

"Yes; that's possible, of course, but somehow I don't believe it," Dale told him.

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"I believe they are scouts," said Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, that's how it strikes me," replied Dale. "Well, lads, we'll hurry along an' tell General Braddock what we've seen."

CHAPTER XII

AN AMBUSH

GENERAL Braddock learned from Tom Dale that a direct advance along the east side of the river would lead through a difficult stretch of wilderness, and a long, narrow defile which offered a splendid opportunity for an ambush. He determined to avoid the peril by crossing the river, and, once past the danger, recrossing to follow the road to the French fort. He showed little interest in the four Hurons whom the scouts had encountered near the deserted cabin. He called them roving vagabonds, whom his troops would soon put to flight. His reckless confidence filled Tom Dale with gloomy misgivings.

"Boys, I fear the General is foolin' himself about the Injuns an' Canadians," he told his companions. "He seems to believe that both of 'em will run like deer at sight of his red-coats. Maybe so, but I doubt it."

"I also doubt it," said Jim.

"The Hurons are brave," declared Kichki-

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net. "My people have fought many battles with them. I have heard my father tell about them."

Dale nodded confirmation.

"They're sharp, as well as brave," he said. "I believe the English troops have plenty of courage, an' are as willin' an' eager to fight as our boys from the provinces, but they don't understand wilderness ways. If the Injuns an' Canadians suddenly come screechin' through the woods, I'm wonderin' what will happen? I've fought both of 'em, an' I know they're a bad lot to handle."

"The Virginians know it, too," said Clayborne.

"Yes; they know it, an' I believe the regulars will know it before we're through with this job," Dale replied, soberly.

The troops were in high spirits at the thought of going into battle on the following day. All were confident of success. They had little doubt that they would speedily rout the French and capture the fort. The Virginians anticipated a stiff fight with the Canadians and Indians, but they, too, felt certain that the artillery and the regulars would soon overcome them.

"We shall sleep in the French fort to-mor-

row night," an English officer declared, confidently.

At daylight the men were roused from their blankets, and an hour later they forded the river. Then they advanced slowly through the woods until they passed the perilous ravine of which Dale had given warning. When they came to another suitable fording place, General Braddock ordered a halt.

It seemed probable that if the French had been warned they would attempt to oppose them at that spot. As a precaution, therefore, the scouts, the Oneidas and two companies of militia in command of Colonel Gage, were sent across the river as an advance guard. They forded safely, and landed without opposition. The scouts made a careful reconnaissance in the vicinity, but failed to find signs of the enemy.

"It looks good," declared Clayborne. "It is evident that the French know nothing of our approach."

"I am not so sure of that," replied Dale.

"Well, Tom, if they know about us, this is where they should make their stand," declared Clayborne.

"Dick, you an' the French may hold different idees about that," laughed Dale. "We have a

long ways ahead of us before we reach the fort, an' they've plenty of time for playin' their tricks."

"Then you do expect them to attack us," said Clayborne.

"I believe we'll smell powder before we come in sight of Duquesne," Dale told him.

They turned to watch the troops fording the river. Led by the Virginia cavalymen, the regulars and militiamen waded gayly through the water, laughing and singing, and confident of an easy victory at Fort Duquesne. Behind them followed the artillery, the lumbering baggage train and the pack horses. General Braddock and his aides closed the rear. The crossing was made without mishap, and the entire force was assembled at the edge of the forest along the east side of the river.

After a short delay, the scouts and the Oneidas were sent ahead to reconnoiter, and a few moments later the troops followed them into the forest. They advanced in two divisions; the first being composed of the cavalry, a company of axmen, a strong force of English regulars and provincial militiamen commanded by Colonel Gage, three cannons, three tool wagons, and several companies of regulars and militia-men to close the rear. Close behind followed

the main division, commanded by General Braddock, consisting of regulars and militiamen, the balance of the artillery, the baggage train, and the pack horses. Flanking parties made their way through the forest on both sides of the column.

The Oneidas deployed through the woods in search of their foes, while the scouts advanced cautiously along the road to Fort Duquesne. Jim was silent and thoughtful. He realized that the war with the French had actually begun, and he was about to engage in deadly combat with his enemies. Although he was without fear, the thought of going forth to fight and kill sobered him. However, as a loyal subject of the British King, he believed that it was his duty to do his share in driving out the defiant foes who had invaded the English domains. He felt certain that it was what his father would have wished him to do, and the thought gave him enthusiasm. His companions appeared equally inspired. All of them were familiar with the savage methods of guerilla warfare which the French and their Indian allies had waged along the English frontiers, and they were ready and eager to assist in overcoming the peril. Jim wondered how the Mohawk felt about it.

"Kichkinet, how do you feel about this thing?" he inquired.

"Achawi, you are my brother," replied the Mohawk. "You have helped me to do big things. You have saved my life. Now you have come here to help your people. It is good. I am a Mohawk. When my brother goes out to fight, I will go with him. That is all I know about it. It is enough."

"Kichkinet, you are a true and loyal friend," Jim said, warmly. "I shall remember your words."

They had passed through a wide, bushy ravine, and were advancing into the gloomy depths of a vast pine forest, when a piercing yell rang through the woods. They stopped and turned to one another in alarm. Then the cry was repeated on both sides of them.

"Watch out; we're in for it," cried Dale.

"It is the Oneidas," said Kichkinet. "They have found our enemies."

"We must warn the troops," declared Jim.

"Fall back," said Dale.

At that moment a wild bedlam of shouts and yells sounded through the wilderness, and they saw the Oneidas running toward them. Then heavy volleys of musketry rattled through the woods, and the Oneidas sprang behind trees

and began to shoot at their foes. Bullets whined ominously over the road, and Bob Carroll suddenly spun about on his heels and fell lifeless beside his companions. Dale and Clayborne seized him and carried him away. Jim and Kichkinet rushed along the road to warn the troops.

"They have been caught!" Jim cried, despairingly.

The troops had been surprised as they entered the ravine, and the fierce and sudden attack had thrown them into disorder. Exposed to the deadly fire of their unseen foes, for the moment they appeared to be confused and helpless. The Virginia calvarymen attempted to ride their frightened horses into the woods, but they met a terrific rifle fire that soon turned them back. Many were killed in the hopeless charge, and the riderless horses galloped wildly among the troops and added to the confusion and peril. The English officers formed their men in line of battle, and attempted to advance into the timber. They rushed forward, cheering bravely, but the wily enemy scattered through the woods like a covey of frightened quail. Unfamiliar with that crafty method of Indian warfare, the English troops halted in bewilderment. At that instant the Indians and

Canadians rallied and surrounded their foes. Fighting from cover, they soon confused and completely demoralized the English regulars. The latter gave way, and retreated to the road with heavy loss.

In the meantime the artillerymen had unlimbered the cannons, and were shooting into the timber. For some moments the enemy was thrown into confusion by the roar of the guns and the shot crashing through the limbs of the trees. They soon rallied, however, and again advanced to the attack. The Virginians alone were able to cope with them. Quick to realize the folly of attempting to fight in the open, they broke ranks and took shelter in the timber. Then, fighting from cover, they made heroic efforts to drive off their foes and rescue the troops from their perilous predicament. The attempt was useless, for the Indians and Canadians swarmed about them like angry hornets, and made the road a death trap from which there appeared to be little chance of escape.

Jim and Kichkinet soon found themselves in the thick of the fight. Unable to persuade the English officers to lead their men to cover, Jim finally joined the Virginians at the edge of the timber. The Oneidas, too, having retreated

along the side of the road, were now fighting their enemies with the sly, cautious methods of Indian warfare. Their excited whoops rose defiantly above the din of battle, and Kichkinet thrilled at the sound.

"Listen, Achawi, it is the war cry of my people," he cried, enthusiastically.

The English troops and most of the provincial militiamen crowded together in the open road. It was a hopeless position. Exposed to a destructive fire, the bewildered men looked vainly through the smoke for a sight of the foes who threatened them with destruction. Their enemies, however, were cleverly concealed at the edge of the woods, and it was impossible to discover them.

"Oh, what folly," Jim cried, disconsolately. "Unless our men seek shelter they will be destroyed before sunset."

"It is bad," declared Kichkinet. "The white chief is foolish to keep his warriors standing out there in the open."

Then, above the sharp rattle of musketry, and the louder roar of the cannons, they heard the shrill notes of a bugle, and they realized that General Braddock and the main body of troops had arrived. For a moment Jim took hope. He believed that the reinforcements

might turn the tide of battle, and gain the victory for the English.

“Hurrah! General Braddock has arrived,” he cried, joyously. “Now we shall soon overcome our foes.”

At that moment the troops in the road began to give way. Stunned and demoralized by the devastating fire and unfamiliar tactics of their foes, they sought to escape from the peril. Unmindful of the commands and threats of their officers, they retreated wildly down the road and attempted to find shelter among the troops who had come to help them. The panic quickly spread, and in a short time the entire command was thrown into wild disorder. The men huddled together in dense masses, helpless targets for the rifles of their merciless foes. Some of the militiamen, and a few English regulars made their way to the edge of the woods and attempted to fight from cover. General Braddock, however, unfamiliar with the methods of Indian warfare, and mistaking the action for cowardice, drove them back and forced them to stand with their companions in the open road. It was a fatal error, that placed his entire force at the mercy of the enemy. Terrorized by the fierce yells of the Indians, and the storm of bullets that swept the road, the troops cast off dis-

cipline and became a wild, frenzied mob of panic stricken men; each man intent upon saving himself from the death that was dropping his comrades beside him. Disheartened and confused by a method of attack that offered them little chance for resistance, they fought at random, aiming their rifles wherever they saw a puff of smoke. Many fired directly toward the Virginians; others mistook the Oneidas for foes; and some, crazed by panic, shot recklessly among their comrades. General Braddock rode furiously to and fro attempting to bring order from chaos. Colonel Washington was equally fearless. Many officers had already been killed, but those who survived exposed themselves with reckless daring in their efforts to rally the disheartened troops.

Encouraged by the disorder among their enemies, the Indians and Canadians made desperate efforts to drive back the Virginians and the Oneidas, who alone prevented them from surrounding the helpless troops in the ravine. Employing the methods of their crafty foes, the Virginians and their Indian allies fought with a grim, stubborn ferocity that made them invincible.

Jim and Kichkinet had joined Dale, Bradford and Clayborne in a sheltered refuge be-

tween a number of large bowlders. Thus intrenched, they waged a gallant and effective fight. Each of the scouts was a calm and expert marksman, and the foe who exposed himself was doomed.

"If General Braddock would only lead his troops into the woods and fight from cover, we might still win the victory," Jim said, regretfully.

"It is too late," declared Dale. "The regulars an' some of the militiamen have—"

"Watch out!" warned Kichkinet.

A moment afterward a company of Hurons rushed toward them. The scouts fired a deadly volley that drove them to cover. Sheltered by the trees they yelled defiance, and fired several futile volleys.

"Watch out behind," warned Dale.

The attack had been a trick to draw the attention of the scouts while another company of Hurons attempted to get behind them. Having discovered the stratagem, Jim and Clayborne covered the rear, while their comrades watched the foes in front of them.

"They've got us in a tight fix," Dale said, grimly. "If there's enough of 'em, they may rush in an' get us."

"There is *one* who will not come any closer,"

Clayborne declared, savagely, as he reloaded his rifle.

Then Dale shot.

"Thar's another that'll stay behind," he said, "It's like watchin' for squirrels."

"Hi, that *was* a close call," cried Clayborne, as he removed his cap and stared at a small round hole through the crown.

"Lie low, Dick; lie low," Dale cautioned him.

"I don't like the idea of those scamps getting behind us," Bradford said, uneasily. "If they cut us off from our friends, we shall be in a bad way."

"I'm thinkin' about that," Dale told him.

At that moment Kichkinet raised his voice in a wild, ringing whoop that rose above the tumult, and reverberated shrilly through the woods. Before the sound died away he whooped again. Then he repeated the call the third time. His companions turned to him in surprise.

"Mohawk, what makes you feel so good?" inquired Dale.

"I have called my brothers; pretty soon you will see the Hurons running like rabbits," said Kichkinet.

"Good," cried Jim.

They waited anxiously, and then they heard

the fierce Oneida war cry ringing out behind them. A few moments afterward a strong force of Oneidas rushed through the timber, and drove the Hurons before them. The scouts cheered wildly as their enemies fled beyond rifle shot.

"The Oneidas are very brave," Jim told Kichkinet.

"The Oneidas and the Mohawks are brothers," said Kichkinet.

Then Broken Face, the Oneida leader, and several warriors made their way to the bowlders. They crouched down beside the scouts, and Broken Face struck the ground with his fist.

"It is bad," he cried. "Achawi, what I warned you about has come to pass. The great white chief has been shot. His warriors are running toward the river. There is no one left to fight but the warriors in the blue coats and ourselves. The warriors in the blue coats are very brave, but many of them have been killed. Many Oneidas have been killed. Everything has gone against us. We should have listened to the war bird."

The scouts stared at the Oneida in speechless amazement. For several moments they refused to believe his words. What he had told them

seemed impossible. Broken Face guessed their thoughts.

"My brothers, I have told you what my eyes have seen," he declared. "Listen; your ears will tell you that I have spoken the truth."

"It is true," cried Dale.

Except for the reports of rifles on their right, where the Virginians had made their stand, the din of battle had ceased. Far behind them they heard a few scattered musket shots. The words of Broken Face appeared to be confirmed.

"Oh, oh, oh!" moaned Clayborne, as he bowed his head in his hands.

They looked at one another in despair. Grief kept them silent. They saw a militiaman approaching cautiously through the timber. Clayborne waved his hand, and the man hurried toward them.

"I bring bad news," he cried, as he reached them. "Everything is lost. General Braddock has been mortally wounded, and his troops are fleeing in panic. We must attempt to cover the retreat. Captain Wyatt desires you to join us."

"It is the only thing we can do," agreed Dale. "Broken Face, call in your brothers. We'll drop back and join the militia."

The Oneida raised his voice in the shrill whoop which was the rallying call of his people. Three times he repeated the signal. Then they waited anxiously for the reply. At last they heard it, some distance ahead of them. Soon afterward they saw the Oneidas retreating cautiously through the woods. They were moving swiftly from tree to tree, and fighting back their foes who appeared to be close behind them.

"Retreatin' is a dangerous job," said Dale. "When we begin to fall back, the French will think we're losin' courage, an' then they'll be likely to rush us."

When the Oneidas joined them, they began a slow, cautious retreat toward the Virginians. As Dale had anticipated, the Canadians and Hurons instantly interpreted the maneuver as the signal of defeat. Yelling fiercely, they rushed recklessly upon their foes in the hope of throwing them into a rout.

"Fight 'em back," Dale cried, savagely.

They took shelter behind trees and fought stubbornly. The Canadians and their Indians attempted to surround them, but the Oneidas were alert to the peril and drove them back. Then for a long time it was a matter of cautious watching, each side waiting for the other to move. At last, however, a company of Vir-

ginians came to the assistance of the scouts, and after a short, desperate fight the Canadians and Hurons were forced to give way.

"This is our chance," cried Dale.

With the Oneidas forming an impregnable skirmish line to cover the retreat, the little company moved back to join the main force of Virginians. They reached them in safety, and then the entire force, under command of Captain Wyatt, retreated carefully through the woods along the edge of the road. The enemy followed cautiously behind them, but showed little inclination to venture nearer.

"They've learned their lesson," said Clayborne.

"Don't be too sure," Dale cautioned him.

As they moved slowly along the edge of the road they saw the grim evidence of the disastrous defeat. It was a depressing sight. The cannons had been abandoned, and about them lay the bodies of the brave men who had defended them. The baggage wagons had been left at the side of the road, with the horses lying dead in their traces. The ravine was littered with the lifeless forms of soldiers and horses.

"This is terrible," cried Jim.

Then they heard the reports of muskets far-

ther down the road, and soon afterward they came upon a small force of militiamen who had been surrounded and separated from their companions. A sharp skirmish followed and the Canadians and Indians were driven off. They soon retired to join their comrades who had stopped to pillage the baggage wagons at the scene of the fight.

“Now, maybe they’ll leave us,” said Dale.

When they arrived at the fording place they found that the troops had crossed the river in wild panic, and were continuing their flight toward Turtle Creek. The Virginians and the Oneidas stopped at the river, but the militiamen whom they had rescued from their foes rushed into the water and crossed to the other side.

“We’ll go down this side of the river, an’ meet ’em at the creek,” proposed Dale.

“It will be easier than crossing over, and I don’t expect much more trouble from our foes,” replied Captain Wyatt.

“No; they won an easy victory, and now they’ll loiter to examine the plunder,” declared Clayborne.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BROKEN ARMY

CAPTAIN Wyatt and his little force made their way to Turtle Creek without opposition from their foes, although the Oneidas several times brought warning of French scouts who were following cautiously through the woods.

"They've had about enough," said Dale. "They'll follow for a ways to make sure that we don't plan to go back an' finish the fight."

"I wish we might," Jim replied, heartily.

"I would gladly give my life to defeat them," declared Clayborne.

"Gentlemen, I share your feelings," Captain Wyatt told them. "However, it is useless to hope. Our forces are shattered and demoralized. There is little chance of rallying them. Their one thought is to escape from this dreary wilderness which has proved to be a death trap. A terrible disaster has overtaken us, but we may find some consolation in the thought that we have attempted to do our duty."

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"Is it true that General Braddock has received a mortal wound?" Jim inquired, anxiously.

"I fear so," replied Captain Wyatt. "I received the news from the leader of the Oneidas. He claims to have seen General Braddock fall."

"His word is reliable," declared Jim.

"I feel certain of it," said Captain Wyatt. "The Oneidas have rendered splendid service, and I fear that many of them have been killed."

"I trust, sir, that our people will appreciate the sacrifice," Jim told him.

"I shall make it my duty to acquaint them with the facts," declared the officer.

At Turtle Creek they overtook the troops. They had just crossed the river, and were preparing to resume their flight through the wilderness. Haggard and wild eyed, the men presented a pitiful appearance as they crowded together at the edge of the forest, peering uneasily into the shadows as if fearful of again discovering the savage foes whose wild, haunting yells still throbbed in their ears. Their pride, their confidence and even their courage had left them, and they were like frightened children who had suddenly awakened from a horrible dream. Many were severely wounded, but they made light of their injuries, lest their

comrades might leave them in the mad race to escape from their foes.

"We must be off; we must be off," they told one another in low frightened whispers.

The officers attempted to rally them, but the effort was useless. The sight of the Oneidas filled them with fresh terror. Some raised their rifles with trembling hands and would have shot down those loyal allies, but Captain Wyatt and the Virginians rushed forward and disarmed them. Then they broke away and stumbled blindly along the road, a long, straggling line of broken men, fleeing in wild, senseless panic from the foes whom at dawn they had regarded with contempt. Jim joined the Virginians at the side of the road, and looked on sadly as the troops filed past. They presented a distressing contrast to the gay, confident company that had advanced over the same route earlier in the day.

"Where is General Braddock?" Jim asked Captain Wyatt.

"The wounded have been carried on in advance of the column," the officer told him.

At that moment a gray-haired English sergeant staggered toward them. He appeared to be exhausted and on the verge of collapse. Jim seized him to save him from falling. A bloody

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bandage was twisted awkwardly about his head, and one arm dangled helplessly at his side. He was the man who had spoken against the Indians at Fort Cumberland. He glared at Jim with fierce, threatening eyes.

"Your Virginians and Indians are to blame for this," he shouted. "If they'd stood their ground and helped us, we might have beaten the French. They did as I told you they'd do. At the first shot they deserted us and ran to cover like rabbits. If I had my way I'd give orders to shoot every last one of 'em."

"Be gone, you fool," Jim cried, angrily, as he pushed him away.

When the last of the refugees had passed, Captain Wyatt assembled the Virginians and marched slowly along the road. Their gallantry had exposed them to heavy loss, and the little band of survivors was but a pitiful remnant of the gallant company that had sacrificed themselves to save the troops from annihilation. Captain Wyatt and a young corporal were the only officers who had survived. The Oneidas, too, had suffered heavily, and many famous warriors had been killed. They followed silently after the Virginians, and Jim and Kichkinet dropped back to join them.

"My brother, the Oneidas were very brave," Jim told Broken Face.

The Oneida nodded. He and his warriors appeared sober and depressed. It was a long time before he spoke.

"Achawi, we came here to do a great thing," he said, finally. "Now we are turning back like frightened children. It is bad."

"Yes, my brother, it is bad," agreed Jim.

They followed drearily after the troops until darkness fell. Then the men bearing the wounded were forced to halt. The officers took advantage of the delay and attempted to rally and reorganize the shattered force. About one hundred men, besides the Virginians and the Oneidas, volunteered to remain and guard the camp until daylight. The others continued their retreat; fearing to stop lest the crafty foe might suddenly rush upon them from the darkness.

"We must keep going; the Indians are on our trail!" they cried, excitedly.

They fled into the night, filled with a mad desire to get as far as possible from the scene of their disastrous defeat. Long before daylight, however, many dropped from exhaustion, and others blundered from the trail and lost their way in the grim black forest.

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"Where will they stop?" Jim asked anxiously.

"Perhaps, not until they reach Fort Cumberland," said Captain Wyatt.

"It is fortunate that the Canadians and their Indians failed to follow us, for they would have found many helpless victims," declared Clayborne.

"Aye, Dick, that they would," replied Dale.

Soft couches of spruce boughs were provided for the wounded, and a strong force of sentinels was posted about the camp. Then several fires were lighted, and the disheartened, battle worn men assembled in little groups to discuss the catastrophe that had overtaken them.

"Mohawk, it has been a bad day for our people," Jim said, solemnly.

"The war bird warned us about it, but we closed our ears," Kichkinet reminded him.

The night passed without alarm, and shortly after daylight they resumed the march through the wilderness. It was not long before they came upon the exhausted stragglers who had been left behind by the fleeing troops. Many were entirely helpless, and, as there were no horses, Captain Wyatt and his men were compelled to leave them. However, they left food and water, and assured them that Colonel Dun-

bar would soon send men and horses to bring them to the fort.

"Colonel Washington and several cavalrymen have gone to meet Colonel Dunbar, and bring relief," said Captain Wyatt.

"It cannot come too soon," Jim told him.

Two days passed before they finally met a convoy of wagons bearing provisions and medical supplies for the wounded. A strong force of militiamen from Colonel Dunbar's division accompanied the relief train. They said that Colonel Dunbar and his troops were encamped at a place called the Great Meadows, a day's journey farther on.

"Perhaps our men will stop there, and, reinforced by the fresh troops and the artillery, we still may be able to return and overcome the French," Jim said, hopefully.

"God grant it," Captain Wyatt replied, fervently.

However, when they reached Colonel Dunbar's camp, late the following day, they found the entire force preparing to turn about and retreat to Fort Cumberland. The wild, exaggerated tales of the terrorized men who had faced the foe soon weakened the confidence of the others, and filled them with demoralizing fear. The shock of the unexpected defeat, the

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fate of General Braddock, the staggering loss among his troops and the sight of wounded comrades spread the panic among the untried militiamen and the bewildered English regulars. The officers appeared to be as confused and helpless as their men.

"All is lost," Captain Wyatt cried, bitterly. "The expedition has ended in failure."

That night General Braddock died of his wounds, and his death completed the demoralization of the troops. Deprived of the commander upon whom they had depended for victory, both officers and men gave way to despair. Awed by their misfortune, they abandoned all thought of attempting to regain the victory from the French. A retreat seemed the only alternative, for of fourteen hundred men who had followed General Braddock into the wilderness, less than five hundred had escaped unharmed; while of eighty-five officers, sixty-three had been killed or wounded. The cannons, the baggage wagons, and most of the pack horses that were with the defeated troops had been lost.

"It is folly to invite further slaughter," declared an English captain.

Soon afterward orders were issued for a retreat to Fort Cumberland. Then followed a

scenes of wild disorder. Unwilling to impede their progress with the cannons and baggage train, the troops were ordered to destroy them. The work was begun at once. The cannons were burst; the shells were buried; barrels of powder were staved and the contents scattered through the woods; most of the baggage wagons were dismantled and burned; and a large portion of the supplies which had caused the fatal delay at Alexandria were left behind.

"Such destruction is shameful," Tom Dale cried, indignantly.

"Everything might be carried to Fort Cumberland, but the troops have gone mad," Captain Wyatt said, sadly.

Jim and Kichkinet looked on in silent amazement.

The Oneidas, however, took advantage of the opportunity to secure bountiful supplies of powder and provisions. Kichkinet nodded approval.

"What the white men throw away, my brothers will use," he said.

At dawn General Braddock was buried in the open road, and then troops, horses and wagons passed over his grave to destroy evidences of the burial, and prevent the Hurons from finding

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the body. At the end of four days the dejected troops arrived at Fort Cumberland.

"We have been defeated; General Braddock has been killed!" they called out, excitedly, as they crowded into the stockade.

The little garrison was thrown into confusion by the announcement. For long anxious weeks they had awaited the arrival of a courier with news of a splendid victory at Fort Duquesne. The possibility of defeat had never entered their minds. Now that it had come they were unwilling to accept it. They gathered eagerly about the men who had been with Braddock, and clamored for details of the disaster.

"It is true; it is true," they cried, forlornly, when they had heard the depressing story from the survivors.

At that moment Broken Face, the Oneida leader, joined Jim and Kichkinet.

"My brothers, the fight is over; there is nothing more to do; we are about to go back to our people," he said. "We will travel with bowed heads and heavy hearts, for many of our brothers are lying back there in the woods. Now I see that we were foolish to go ahead with this thing, when the great war bird warned us to turn back. Nothing good has come of it. Everything is bad."

“Broken Face, I have listened to your words, and my heart is heavy,” replied Jim. “You are a brave warrior. Your brothers fought and died like men. They held back our enemies, and made it possible for the troops to get away. I shall tell my people about it. They will remember it.

“And now, my brother, listen sharp to my words. Keep them in your heart. Tell them to your people. Our enemies, the French, have won the first battle. My brother, a great war between the French and my people has just begun. There will be many more battles. My people will send many warriors to fight the French. We will drive them from our country no matter what it may cost. They will be unable to stand against us. The great chief of my people lives far away across the big water. He will send great ships with many warriors and many big guns. Then we will move against our enemies. We will knock down their forts, and drive them into the north. What I am telling you will surely come to pass. Keep thinking about it. My brother, remember that the French and their Hurons have killed your brothers. You are an Oneida. An Oneida does not forget such things.”

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"It is true," cried Broken Face, as his eyes flashed threateningly.

When Captain Wyatt learned that the Oneidas were about to depart, he sent a deputation of officers to escort them into the stockade. The troops were assembled to receive them, a cannon boomed a salute, and they were accorded the honors which they so well deserved. Captain Wyatt praised their valor and thanked them for their valuable assistance. Then, after Broken Face had made a brief reply, they filed soberly through the gateway of the stockade, and disappeared into the wilderness.

"Kichkinet, now you know that my people are your friends," said Jim.

"It is good," replied the Mohawk.

Then a militiaman approached them, and said that Captain Wyatt desired to see Jim at his quarters. Jim hastened to the fort.

"Mr. Mason, here is a communication which came by courier from Alexandria," he said, as he produced a sealed document. "It has been held here awaiting your return, and I have just received it."

Jim instantly recognized the bold handwriting of Colonel Johnson. His heart beat wildly as he broke the seals and began to read.

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Then he turned to Captain Wyatt with sparkling eyes.

"Colonel Johnson is about to advance against the French at Crown Point, and he desires me to join him as soon as possible," he said. "Captain Barker is at Alexandria with his ship. He will leave within the week."

"We shall be sorry to see you go," Captain Wyatt told him. "No doubt the New York troops will embark with you."

"It appears likely," said Jim.

He hurried away to find Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, I have good news," he cried, enthusiastically. "The Great Chief has sent us his words. He is about to fight the French, and he has called us to help him. Hurrah, we shall soon be off!"

"It is good," Kichkinet said, quietly.

CHAPTER XIV

TIDINGS OF DEFEAT

THE people of New York were stunned at the news of General Braddock's defeat and death. Like the little garrison at Fort Cumberland, they had awaited word of a great victory over the French at Fort Duquesne.

"Our troops have been defeated; General Braddock has been killed!" they cried, as they rushed excitedly through the streets.

The announcement threw the town into an uproar. Houses, taverns and shops were deserted, as the people thronged to the fort to learn the details of the disaster. Many pale faced women, with wild frightened eyes, clamored for news of relatives who had failed to return from the ill-fated expedition.

"Mohawk, it is a sad return," Jim said, gloomily.

Kichkinet nodded.

"These women are like Mohawk women," he said. "They feel very bad when their warriors do not come back."

Later in the day Jim learned that a sloop was about to sail with supplies for the troops who were mobilizing at Albany for the expedition against Crown Point. Eager to reach Colonel Johnson at the earliest possible moment, Jim went in search of the captain to engage passage for Kichkinet and himself.

Four days later they arrived at Albany. The quaint Dutch settlement was filled with troops. There were many companies of militia from New York and the New England provinces, several new regiments of English regulars, a corps of artillery, and great trains of baggage wagons and packhorses. The entire force was encamped on the open meadows, or commons, at each end of the town. Jim learned, however, that Colonel Johnson was at Fort Johnson, and he determined to go to him at once.

"Mohawk, we must go to the Great Chief," he said.

"It is good," replied Kichkinet.

The announcement of General Braddock's defeat caused the same wild excitement at Albany that they had witnessed at New York. Even the stolid Dutch merchants and traders were roused from their composure and filled with alarm.

"If der Vrench vin der var, dey vill take

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avay der injuns, un den ve vill lose our drade," they told one another.

The troops were greatly depressed by the gloomy tidings from Virginia. However, they were far from disheartened, and resolved to offset the defeat with a notable victory at Crown Point.

"We'll soon match scores with the Frenchies," they declared.

Early the following day Jim and Kichkinet set out along the road to Schenectady. They reached the settlement shortly before nightfall, and received an enthusiastic welcome from the Camerons.

"Friends, I bring bad news," Jim said, disconsolately.

"Jim, my boy, what has happened?" Donald Cameron asked, anxiously.

"Our troops have been defeated with great loss, and General Braddock has been killed."

The clergyman seated himself, and bowed his head in his hands. It was some time before he attempted to speak.

"What a terrible calamity has befallen us," he said, finally. "Jim, it seems almost unbelievable."

"It is a hard blow," Jim told him. "However, Mr. Cameron, I feel certain that Colonel

Johnson and his troops will overcome this unfortunate defeat with a telling victory at Crown Point."

"Aye, my boy, that he will," Mrs. Cameron cried, bravely. "At any rate, Donald, we may be thankful that Jim has been spared to us."

"It is true," the clergyman agreed, earnestly.

"And now, my friends, I must report to the commander at the garrison," Jim told them.

"It will be sad news," declared Donald Cameron.

Long before Jim reached the fort, however, he was besieged by a throng of excited friends who asked for news of the encounter with the French at Duquesne. When they learned the result of the disastrous expedition they stared at him in wild-eyed amazement. Jim left them and hurried on to the fort. At the entrance he met Captain MacKenzie from the garrison at Albany.

"Mr. Mason, I am glad to see that you have returned safely from the expedition with General Braddock," Captain MacKenzie told him. "I presume the French fort has been taken."

"Captain MacKenzie, prepare yourself for bad news," said Jim.

The officer drew back in surprise.

"Surely, you cannot mean—" he hesitated.

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"Our troops were defeated and routed with staggering loss," Jim told him. "General Braddock and most of his officers have been killed."

"God help us," moaned Captain MacKenzie.

He called an orderly, and sent the dismal tidings through the fort. Then they went to the quarters of the commanding officer. Night had already fallen when Jim finally left the dejected garrison, and rejoined Kichkinet.

"The old man with the long pipe is waiting for you," said Kichkinet.

They went to the trading store of old Diederich Suydam, and found him pacing excitedly to and fro. He appeared to be greatly agitated.

"Jim, my poy, I hear bad words—are they true?" he inquired anxiously.

"Yes, Mr. Suydam, a great disaster has fallen upon us," said Jim. "As you probably have heard, our troops have been defeated and General Braddock and many of his officers have been killed."

"Yah, yah, I yust heard aboud it, but I did not believe it," said Diederich.

"It is true," declared Jim.

"Dot is bad," replied the Dutchman. "Yah, yah, Jim, dot is bad."

"Never fear, Mr. Suydam, we shall make up

for the defeat when we meet the French at Crown Point," Jim replied cheerfully.

"Vall, Jim, I hope so," Diederich declared, gloomily. "Dose French are makin' drouble up dere. Alreaty they have killed many of our beebles along der frontiers. Jack Crawford tells me about it. He says der woods is filled mit Injuns."

"We shall drive them out," Jim declared, confidently.

Some time later, when they returned to the Camerons, they found many friends assembled at the home of the clergyman to hear further details of the encounter with the French, and Jim spent most of the night answering questions.

Early the following day he left for Fort Johnson. As the river was low and calm, Jim and the Mohawk decided to travel by canoe. Late in the afternoon they arrived at the fort. Their appearance was the signal for an enthusiastic greeting from the garrison.

"Oh, I dread to tell them the horrible truth," Jim groaned.

He had barely stepped from the canoe before he was overwhelmed by a crowd of eager militiamen and scouts, who inquired the result

of General Braddock's expedition against Duquesne.

"We were defeated," Jim told them.

"Defeated?" they cried, incredulously.

"Yes, my friends, our troops were routed, and General Braddock and most of his officers were killed," replied Jim. "And now I must hasten to inform Colonel Johnson. Is he at the fort?"

A sergeant nodded.

"Tell Colonel Johnson that James Mason has arrived with important information," he told the sentry.

In a few moments he was permitted to enter. He passed gloomily along the great hall, and stopped before the council room. His heart filled with despair as he knocked at the great oaken door. It was opened by Colonel Johnson.

"Well, well, here is Mr. Mason, sound and hearty, and come to tell me that we have taken Fort Duquesne, I'll warrant," he cried jovially.

Jim shook his head. For the moment his grief kept him silent. Colonel Johnson looked anxiously into his face.

"Speak, man; what has happened?"

"Our troops were defeated and routed; General Braddock has been killed."

Colonel Johnson appeared like one in a

dream. He moved unsteadily across the room and dropped into a chair. Then he motioned for Jim to be seated.

"Tell me how it happened," he said.

Jim described the ambush and rout of the English forces, and Colonel Johnson listened with close attention. When the disheartening story had been told, he turned to Jim with flashing eyes.

"Mr. Mason, my one fear has been that General Braddock and the English troops might underestimate the peril from the Canadians and their Indian allies," he said. "The blunder has brought disaster. However, we must not grow disheartened. The French have dealt us a severe blow, but we shall rally and resume the fight with stronger determination."

"I am glad to hear you say that, sir," Jim told him.

"As you are aware, I am about to lead a strong force against our enemies at Crown Point," continued Colonel Johnson. "Many of the troops are at Albany; others are already advancing slowly along the river in command of Colonel Lyman. They will await the main force at the Carrying Place, which is about twenty leagues above Albany.

"And now, Mr. Mason, I have urgent need of

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your services. It will be necessary to employ trained and skillful scouts to keep us advised of the plans of the enemy and guard against a repetition of the deplorable disaster which overtook General Braddock. For such work we must depend upon our allies, the Mohawks. I desire that you shall command them. With that object in mind, I have commissioned you a Chief of Scouts with the rank of Lieutenant with his Majesty's troops. As war has come, I feel confident that you will accept the commission as a true and loyal subject of the British King."

"I shall accept, sir, and pledge myself to do my duty to the best of my ability," Jim told him.

"Good," said Colonel Johnson.

He brought a long, sealed document from the council table.

"Lieutenant Mason, I have the honor to commission you a Chief of Scouts in the service of his majesty, George The Second, and, as a commanding officer in his Majesty's forces, I am required to demand your pledge to faithfully perform such duties as may be assigned to you, sacrificing your life if necessary to fulfill your duty. Lieutenant Mason, do you, before Almighty God, so pledge yourself?"

"I do," replied Jim.

"Lieutenant Mason, I welcome you as a fellow officer," said Colonel Johnson, as he offered his hand.

"Thank you," said Jim. "However, I fear I know little of military routine."

"For you, such knowledge is entirely unnecessary," Colonel Johnson assured him. "You will be free to come and go as circumstances demand, and you will not be required either to wear the uniform or conform to the discipline by which most of us are bound. Most of your time will be spent in the wilderness, and while your duties may be difficult and perilous, I feel certain that they will not be irksome."

"May I ask from whom I shall receive orders?" inquired Jim.

"From me alone," said Colonel Johnson. "However, it is my duty to advise you that as an officer with his Majesty's troops you must at all times demand respect and obedience from the troops, and render the same to your superior officers."

"I shall do so," said Jim. "In the meantime, Colonel Johnson, I await your orders."

"Lieutenant Mason, you are to proceed to Caughnawaga to organize a company of Mohawk scouts. I beg to advise that you muster

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at least fifty warriors. When you have organized your company, I desire that you shall march to join the forces at the Carrying Place. Kichkinet is familiar with the route. There you will find further orders awaiting you."

"Very good, sir," replied Jim.

"When can you depart for Caughnawaga?"

"At dawn," Jim told him.

"I must caution you that I have good reasons for suspicion against old Da-yo-ho-go, the crafty Medicine Man. I believe that he is working against us, and I fear that he may attempt to interfere with your plans. I have also been told that La Valle and his friends are attempting to make further trouble between the Indians and ourselves. I feel confident that you will do what you may to overcome these sinister influences."

"I shall watch carefully," Jim assured him.

CHAPTER XV

OFF TO CAUGHNAWAGA

AT DAWN Jim and Kichkinet departed on their journey to Caughnawaga. Dan Holcombe accompanied them to the river.

"We'll soon meet again with the troops at the Carryin' Place," he said, as they entered the canoe.

"I hope so, Dan," Jim told him.

A moment afterward they paddled away, and Holcombe waved his cap as they disappeared around a turn of the river. It was a glorious mid-summer morning, and Jim reveled in the cool pine scented air, and the peaceful silence of his beloved wilderness.

"Mohawk, it is good to be home again," he cried, enthusiastically.

Kichkinet nodded.

They soon passed the isolated cabins on the border of the settlement, and entered the vast stretch of unspoiled forest. It followed closely along the edge of the river, and darkened the water with its shadows. Mystery and peril

lurked in the dim, gloomy solitudes. At mid-day they approached the rapids, and Jim turned the canoe toward shore. Kichkinet nodded approval.

"It is good," he said.

"They nearly got you before, and we shall take no chances this time," Jim told him.

"It was the Water Monsters," replied Kichkinet.

"Tell me about them," urged Jim.

The Mohawk shook his head. It was the second time he had refused to talk about those strange Medicine Creatures, and Jim believed that the mere mention of them filled him with superstitious fear. They drew the canoe from the water and carried it through the woods. When they were beyond the head of the rapids, they resumed their journey up the river. Shortly afterward an eagle appeared from the timber and circled above the canoe. They recalled the warning of Broken Face, the Oneida war leader. This time, however, the bird kept silent, and flew directly up the river.

"It is good," declared Kichkinet. "There is no danger. The war bird is leading us to our people."

It was dark when they finally saw the glow from the fires in the Mohawk village. As they

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approached, Kichkinet imitated the call of the great horned owl. Three times he repeated the signal. Then they waited for the reply. In a few moments it sounded at the edge of the water.

"Now, my people know about us," said Kichkinet.

They paddled to the shore, and found a company of Mohawks assembled to meet them. Kichkinet spoke briefly with his father, and his uncle Short Dog, and then the Mohawk chief turned to Jim.

"Achawi, you have come back—it is good," he said. "My lodge is open."

"Ha-yo-went-ha, I am glad to return to my friends," replied Jim.

They entered the village and accompanied Ha-yo-went-ha to his lodge. Short Dog joined them. They found old Da-go-no-we-da, the grandfather of Kichkinet, smoking beside a small fire in the center of the lodge. He looked up curiously as they entered.

"My father, Kichkinet and his brother Achawi have returned," Ha-yo-went-ha told him.

"Where are they?" inquired Da-go-no-we-da. "I wish to see them."

Kichkinet went forward and seated himself

beside Da-go-no-we-da. They talked for some moments, and then Kichkinet signaled for Jim to approach.

"My grandfather wishes to talk with you," he told him. "I will tell you his words."

Jim stood before the aged warrior.

"Da-go-no-we-da says he is glad to see you here," said Kichkinet. "He says you have been away a long time. He says he has been thinking about you. He says you must tell him where you have been and what you have done."

"Tell Da-go-no-we-da that I am glad to be here," replied Jim. "Tell him that I do not speak his words, so I will ask my brother Kichkinet to tell him what he desires to know."

They seated themselves about the fire, and Kichkinet talked earnestly with his people. As they conversed rapidly in the Mohawk tongue, Jim was at a loss to follow the talk. He felt certain, however, that Kichkinet was giving an account of their experiences since they had left the Mohawk camp. Ha-yo-went-ha and Short Dog appeared to be much impressed by his words. The night was far advanced when Kichkinet finally finished his story. Then the three older Mohawks talked quietly together. At last Ha-yo-went-ha turned to Jim.

"Achawi, my son has told us many big

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things," he said. "We have heard about the great villages of your people. We have heard about great canoes with wings like birds. We have heard about great guns that knock down trees. We have heard about the big water. These things are mysterious, but we believe the words of Kichkinet."

"They are true," Jim assured him.

"Achawi, my son has told me how you saved him from the fierce Water Monsters," Ha-yo-went-ha said, soberly. "It was a great thing to do. You are very brave. I will think about it a long time.

"Now, my brother, I will talk about something different. I will talk about the great fight. Kichkinet has told us about it. Our hearts are heavy. When the war bird warned you, you should have turned around. It was foolish to go ahead. Now you see what came of it. The great white war leader was killed. Many of his people were killed. Many of our brothers, the Oneidas, were killed. Everything was lost. It is bad. I believe the Oneidas will be very mad. I do not know what my people will say about it."

He paused and looked sharply at Jim. His words conveyed a significant warning. Jim suddenly realized that he was confronted with a

perilous possibility. He believed that the defeat of the English troops might weaken the confidence of the Mohawks and their allies, and make it difficult to enlist them for further operations against the French. They had been told that the English troops were invincible, and that the French would be unable to stand before them. Now they were about to learn that in the first encounter the English forces had met with a crushing defeat. Jim feared the result. He considered carefully before he spoke.

“Great chief, I see that your heart is heavy because the French have driven back my people,” he said. “You must not think about it. My people will soon drive away the French. Yes, my brother, we will do what we have set out to do. We have many warriors and many great guns. Pretty soon those guns will sweep away the French forts. Our people fell into a trap. Now they will be more cautious. There will be many more battles, and you will see that my people are stronger than the French. Your brother, the Great Chief, is about to lead his warriors against our enemies. He has sent me here to give you his words. He wishes you to help him. He says that the great chief, Ha-yo-went-ha, is his friend. It is written on the wampum belt which you carried to his village.

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The Great Chief wishes many brave Mohawk scouts to help him against the French. He has sent me here to be the leader. If you help the Great Chief he will surely drive away the French, and then everything will be good. Ha-yo-went-ha, you are a great leader. You must tell your people to listen to my words. You must tell them to help my people. You must ask them to go with me to fight our enemies. The son of Achawi has spoken."

Jim waited anxiously for Ha-yo-went-ha to speak. For a long time, however, the Mohawk kept silent. He appeared to be meditating upon what he had heard. Once he spoke briefly with Short Dog. The latter nodded. Then Ha-yo-went-ha replied to Jim.

"Achawi, the Great Chief is my friend," he said. "We have carried the wampum belt to your people. We will keep it bright. At the end of the next sun I will call my people for a big talk. I will give them the words of the Great Chief. I will ask them to go on the war trail against our enemies, the French."

"It is good," said Jim.

Soon afterward Jim left him, and went to a small lodge at the other end of the camp, which had been set apart for his use the previous year, when he lived with the Mohawks as a

trader. Kichkinet accompanied him. When they entered the lodge they found Skennek, the young brother of Kichkinet, sleeping soundly on the rude platform of poles that afforded sleeping accommodations at the rear of the lodge. Kichkinet approached softly, and seized the young Mohawk. Skennek sprang up wildly and grappled with him. Then he suddenly recognized them.

“Achawi!” he cried, joyously.

“Skennek,” said Jim.

“Friend - glad - come,” Skennek said, laboriously, in English.

“Brother - good - see,” Jim replied in the Mohawk tongue.

Kichkinet laughed merrily at their efforts to converse. The previous year they had spent considerable time attempting to instruct each other, but neither of them had made much progress toward acquiring the language of the other.

“Kichkinet, will your father tell your people about the fight?” Jim asked, anxiously, as they prepared to sleep.

“If they ask about it, he will tell them,” replied Kichkinet.

“It is bad,” declared Jim.

Kichkinet kept silent.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COUNCIL FIRE

EARLY the following day a courier entered the camp, and said that a company of Oneidas was approaching. Ha-yo-went-ha assembled a number of famous warriors and went to meet the visitors. Soon afterward they entered the village. Jim looked upon them with gloomy misgivings. He felt certain that they had come to tell of General Braddock's defeat, and he realized that their story would make a deep impression upon the Mohawks. They passed many hours in the council lodge, and Jim waited anxiously to learn the result of the conference. Late in the day Kichkinet came to inform him.

"It is bad," he said. "The Oneidas are very mad."

"What do they say?" Jim asked, anxiously.

"They say they were very foolish to listen to the words of the white man," Kichkinet told him. "They say the white men ran away and left them to fight alone. They say many of

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their brothers were killed. They say their people feel very bad about this thing. They say it is foolish to fight for the white men. They say pretty soon the Indians will be swept away, and the white men will take their hunting grounds."

"How do your people feel about it?"

"Some of my people say that the words of the Oneidas are good," Kichkinet told him. "Ach-aw-i, I believe it will be hard to do what the Great Chief has asked you to do. Da-yo-ho-go is talking against it. He says many bad things will happen to us. Da-yo-ho-go is a great Medicine Person. He has told us big things. Most of them have come true."

Jim was filled with despair. Suspicious of Da-yo-ho-go, he believed that the crafty old Medicine Man would seize the opportunity to prejudice his people against the English. Jim knew from former experience that Da-yo-ho-go had great influence with the Mohawks, and he feared that it would be difficult and perilous to oppose him.

"My brother, how does your father feel about this thing?" he asked Kichkinet.

"My father says that we must help the Great Chief and his people," replied Kichkinet.

"It is good," Jim said, heartily.

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He felt considerably encouraged to know that the Mohawk chief would indorse his words. Ha-yo-went-ha had never failed in his pledge to Colonel Johnson and the colonists, and Jim believed he would make a strong and effective appeal to his people.

When Jim and Kichkinet left the lodge they found the village humming with excitement. The Mohawks had assembled in little groups, and appeared to be discussing matters of great importance. It was evident that news of the disaster had spread through the camp. Many people approached Kichkinet and asked for details of the fight. Kichkinet refused to talk.

“Pretty soon you will hear about it,” he said, as he hurried away.

Then, as the day finally came to an end, and the sun sank slowly behind the hills, a fire was lighted in the center of the camp, and the Mohawks assembled for the council. They formed a great circle, and waited patiently for Ha-yo-went-ha to address them. The Oneidas sat with Ha-yo-went-ha, and Short Dog, and Da-yo-ho-go, in the places of honor. Jim sat beside Kichkinet. Behind the warriors were the women and children. For a long time the Mohawks sat in silence. Jim waited in trying

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suspense. At last Ha-yo-went-ha nodded toward Da-yo-ho-go.

The Medicine Man advanced toward the fire. He was tall and broad-shouldered, and of strong physique, and appeared to be well advanced in years. His head was closely cropped, except for a high, narrow crest or mane of hair across his crown. His limbs were clothed in soft doeskin leggings, but the upper part of his body was naked. His face was streaked with colored clay, and his breast was decorated with strange figures and symbols. A great necklace of bear claws encircled his neck. His moccasins were decorated with porcupine quills. He had sharp, cruel features, and small, treacherous eyes. When he reached the fire he opened a buckskin bag, and tossed several handfuls of dried sweet grass into the flames. Then he raised his face toward the sky, and offered a prayer to Ha-wen-ne-yu.

"Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, I have made sweet smoke to please you, and I hope that you will feel good toward us," he cried. "We have come together for a big talk. Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, listen to our words and tell us what to do."

When he finished his appeal he drew the long stemmed peace pipe from its buckskin cover-

ing, and lighted it with an ember from the fire. Then he presented it to Ha-yo-went-ha. The chief smoked, and passed the pipe to the Oneida who sat at his left. When the Oneida had smoked he passed the pipe to the man beside him. Thus it went about the circle until all had smoked. Then the pipe was returned to Da-yo-ho-go, who replaced it in the buckskin cover.

A moment afterward Ha-yo-went-ha rose to open the council. He was a tall, slender man of middle age, with stern features and bold, steady eyes. He wore a small crown of eagle plumes, and a bear claw necklace. The pelt of a timber wolf hung from his belt. He was reserved and dignified, and commanded the respect and admiration of his people.

“My brothers, I have called you here to tell you about a great fight,” he said. “Kichkinet, and Achawi and our brothers the Oneidas were in that fight. Perhaps they will tell you about it. It went against them. The Hurons, and the Pottawattomies, and the Shawnees and the Ojibwas were there. They went to help the French. It was a big fight. The white chief was killed. Many of his people were killed. Many Oneidas were killed. Kichkinet, and Achawi and the Oneidas were very brave. They fought until the last. Some of the white men

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stayed behind and helped them. Some of the white men ran away.

“Now my brothers, listen sharp to what I am about to say. The English are our brothers. We must help them. We have sent the wampum belt to the Great Chief. We have given him good words. We have struck the war post. We have sung the war songs. We are ready to fight. The French are our enemies. All of you know about Tor-toh-ne. You know what he came here to do. Achawi was too sharp for him. The words of Achawi came true. Now we know that the Great Chief and his people are our friends. If we do not help them, the French will come into our country and drive us from our villages. It is what they propose to do.”

He paused and turned toward the Oneidas. For some moments he studied them in silence. Then he pointed his finger at the warrior who had been seated beside him.

“This man is Standing Elk, he is a great warrior,” he said. “My brothers, I will ask Standing Elk to give you some words.”

As Ha-yo-went-ha seated himself, the Oneida rose to speak. He was a short, powerful man in the prime of life. For a moment he glanced around the circle of warriors, and then he be-

gan to talk in strong, vibrant tones that reached to the far end of the camp.

“My brothers, we have come here to tell you about the great fight,” he said. “My people feel bad about it. Many of our brothers were killed. Everything went against us. The white chief and his warriors were very foolish. They would not listen to our words. The great war bird gave us warning, and Broken Face, our leader, told the white men about it. He told them something bad would surely happen. He asked them to turn around. They laughed at him. Then Broken Face listened to their words. We went ahead. It was bad. Pretty soon we caught sight of our enemies. We dropped back to warn the white men. Then we saw that they had been caught in a trap. The Hurons, and the Pottawattomies, and the Shawnees were all around them. Some white men with blue coats ran into the timber and fought as we fight. The others crowded together in the road, like frightened children. When we saw that, we rushed upon our enemies and tried to drive them back. We were in the thick of the fight. That is how so many of our brothers were killed. Then the white men fired the great guns. They were very powerful. They knocked down the trees, and made a ter-

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rible noise, like He-no, The Thunderer. My brothers, I have been in many fights, but I never saw anything like that. The Hurons were frightened and dropped back. We called the white men to run after them. They would not come. They stood in the road. Then the Hurons stopped running. They came back and tried to drive us away. We held them off. Pretty soon the great noise stopped. We did not know what to make of it. Broken Face went back to find out what had happened. When he came back he said, 'The white men are running away.' "

Standing Elk paused, and glanced sharply at the Mohawks. Their faces were calm and emotionless, but their eyes flashed excitedly. In a few moments the Oneida resumed his talk.

"My brothers, there was no one left to help us but the white men in the blue coats and some scouts. Kichkinet and his brother Achawi were with those scouts. They were very brave. They held back many Hurons.

"When we told our people about this thing it made them very mad. They said, 'Our brothers went to help the white chief and his warriors, but the white men ran away and left them to fight alone. We see that we were foolish to go into this fight. Now we will stay in

our lodges, and let the white men fight alone.'

"My brothers, when Broken Face heard those words he was very mad. He said, 'My friends, your words are bad. What will the Mohawks say about this thing? They have made war against the French. We have promised to help them. They are our brothers. We must go through with it.' Then my people said, 'Perhaps our brothers, the Mohawks, do not know about this thing. Perhaps, when they find out about it, they will be very mad. Perhaps they will go to the Great Chief and take away the wampum belt.'

"Then Broken Face sent us here to tell you about it. I am the leader. I have brought you the words of my people. My brothers, tell me how you feel about it."

For a long time the Mohawks failed to reply. They were talking softly among themselves, and Jim watched with grave anxiety. He would have given much to know their thoughts. Then Da-yo-ho-go rose to his feet. The Mohawks instantly became quiet. Ha-yo-went-ha glanced sharply at Short Dog.

"My brothers, I could have told you about this thing, for I saw it in a dream," declared the wily old Medicine Man. "I saw many warriors moving through the woods. Some were

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our people, and some were white men. I saw the great war bird flying over them. The war bird was screaming like a frightened woman. Then all the warriors looked into the sky. I saw a great war leader talking and shaking his head, but I did not hear his words. I saw many white men laughing at him. Pretty soon the war bird flew away toward a place where there were many lodges. I saw the women and children, and I knew it was a village. Then I said, 'The war bird is calling back that great war party. Something bad is going to happen.' Then the warriors went ahead. They did not turn around. Then I said, 'Hi, those people are very foolish. Something bad will surely happen to them.' Now, my brothers, you see that my words have come true."

He paused, and shook his head. The Mohawks watched solemnly. Jim flushed with anger. He had detected the falsehood with which Da-yo-ho-go hoped to deceive and influence the superstitious Mohawks. It was a clever bit of stratagem, and Jim feared the result. For an instant Jim was tempted to expose Da-yo-ho-go as an impostor, but the warning of Colonel Johnson flashed through his mind and kept him silent. In the meantime the Medicine Man had resumed his talk.

"My brothers, Broken Face was very foolish to go ahead. He listened to the words of the white men. They do not know about such things. It is bad to listen to their words. You see that much harm has come of it. The words of the Oneidas are good. We will stay in our village and let the white men fight alone. If we go out to help them, we will be wiped away. There will be no one left but the white men. The war bird has warned us. My brothers, we must listen to his words."

"It is true," declared the Oneidas.

"Achawi, I will ask you to tell my people about this thing," said Ha-yo-went-ha.

Jim walked into the center of the council circle. Kichkinet stood beside him to interpret his words. The Mohawks waited anxiously to hear him. Welcomed to their village the previous year, as the son of a man whom they had trusted and loved, Jim had still further won their esteem and gratitude by exposing the treachery of a crafty French spy, and capturing the man who had killed one of their aged warriors. Having learned that their friend, Achawi, possessed a brave heart and a truthful tongue, the Mohawks gave careful consideration to his words.

"My friends, I have listened to the words of

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Standing Elk, and Da-yo-ho-go, and now I will tell you something different," said Jim. "I was in that fight with my brother Kichkinet. He was very brave. I saw him do many big things. The Oneidas were very brave. Broken Face is a great war leader. It was a big fight. The white chief and his warriors were brave, but they did not know how to fight in the woods. They did not run away. They fought until most of them had been killed. Then they had to fall back. It was the only thing to do. If they stayed there, not one of them would have escaped. Mohawks, you are brave warriors, but when the fight goes against you do you stand before your enemies to be killed? I do not believe you are so foolish.

"Standing Elk says his people are mad about this thing. He says they do not wish to help their white brothers. It is bad. Da-yo-ho-go says if you help the Great Chief and his people you will be destroyed. I do not believe it. The things I have told you have come true. Now listen sharp to my words. My people are very mad about this thing. The young men are crying out for war. Many warriors are coming across the big water to help us. They are bringing the great guns to blow away the French forts. We have set out to drive away

our enemies. Pretty soon you will see them running into the north. Will you help us, or will you sit in your lodges like frightened old women? You have sent the wampum belt to my people. You have struck the war post, and sung your war songs. Does a Mohawk turn around when he has set out to help his friends? No, my brothers, I do not believe it. The French are sharp. They are the friends of your enemies the Hurons, and your enemies the Shawnees. If the French overcome my people, there will be no one to help you. Then the French will bring the Hurons and the Shawnees to live in your lodges. My friends, think about this thing before it is too late. I am your brother. I have talked good words about you to my people. Make them come true.

“Now, Mohawks, I will give you the words of the Great Chief. He is about to lead his warriors to fight the French. You all know about that great man. He has done many things to help you. You know that he will not turn around. You know that he will not run away. You know that he will do what he has set out to do. He wishes the Mohawks to help him. He wishes many brave scouts to find out about his enemies. He says, ‘My brothers, the Mohawks, are brave. I will call them. They

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will come to help me.' He has sent me here to be the leader. Mohawks, will you follow me?"

As Jim finished speaking, Kichkinet struck his tomahawk into the war post.

"The Great Chief and his people are my friends; I will follow Achawi," he cried.

"My friends, you have heard the words of Achawi; you have seen my son strike the war post; now I will ask you what you propose to do?" said Ha-yo-went-ha.

"We will go to help the Great Chief and his people," cried the Mohawks. "We will follow Achawi."

Many warriors rushed forward and struck the war post. Ha-yo-went-ha turned to the Oneidas.

"My brothers, tell your people what we propose to do," he said.

"Great chief, my people will follow their brothers, the Mohawks," declared Standing Elk.

"Good!" Jim cried, joyously.

CHAPTER XVII

JIM LEADS A WAR PARTY

JIM was greatly encouraged at the result of the Mohawk council. It convinced him that for the moment, at least, the influence of old Dago-ho-go had been overcome, and the Mohawks were sincere in their pledge to Colonel Johnson. Seventy-five famous warriors and scouts had enlisted for the expedition against Crown Point.

"Mohawk, your people have done a great thing," Jim said, gratefully.

"My people are your friends," declared Kichkinet.

"It is true," replied Jim.

He realized that a great responsibility had fallen upon him. Having assumed command of the Mohawks, he believed that they would expect him to lead them to victory. Should he fail, he feared that his influence with them would be at an end. For the moment the thought alarmed him. It was his first attempt at leadership, and he wondered if he could fulfill the

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requirements. Many of the warriors who had joined the war party were men of mature years and ripe experience, and he realized that with such critical veterans of the war trail a blunder would be inexcusable. The commission which he had received from Colonel Johnson suddenly assumed a new significance. Jim determined to be worthy of it.

“Kichkinet, you must help me in what I am about to do,” he told the Mohawk.

“Achawi, you are the leader,” replied Kichkinet. “What you ask me to do, I will do; what you wish to know, I will tell you.”

“Good,” said Jim.

The following day the warriors who had joined the war party assembled before the lodge of Ha-yo-went-ha. They made a bold appearance, and Jim looked upon them with respect and admiration. They had streaked their faces with charcoal, the symbol for war, and some had decorated their bodies with red and yellow clay. Their scalp locks were ornamented with tufts of fur and the feathers of the hawk and the eagle. They were naked, except for the buckskin breech-cloth, and but few, even among the older men, carried blankets. Most of them carried their bows, but there were some who were armed with a long barreled rifle

of the white man. Each warrior was provided with a small buckskin bag containing several days' rations of charred corn and maple sugar. Every fourth or fifth man carried a set of fire sticks. All carried tomahawks and hunting knives.

Jim saw many famous warriors in the company. Among them were Stands Alone, a great war leader, who had led his people in many fights with the Shawnees; Little Bear, a noted scout; Black Cloud, who had killed more bears than any other man in the tribe; Dancing Wolf, another noted warrior; and Yellow Eagle, who had led the Mohawks in a long war with the Hurons.

The entire tribe had assembled to witness the departure of the war party, and for a long time the village resounded with the wild strains of the war songs, and the boastful shouts against the enemy. The women, however, were subdued and quiet, as they glanced timidly at the stalwart men who were about to leave them and face the perils of the war trail. Some of the old women were already wailing and shaking their heads. The old men, however, were cackling gleefully, and telling of their own bold exploits in the years that had gone.

Then the Mohawks suddenly became silent

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as Ha-yo-went-ha came from the lodge with Short Dog and old Da-yo-ho-go, who carried the sacred medicine pipe. Jim was somewhat disturbed at the appearance of the Medicine Man. He wondered if he was about to make another protest against the expedition. For some moments they looked admiringly upon the war company. Then Ha-yo-went-ha began to speak.

“My brothers, I see that you are ready to follow Achawi upon the war trail,” he said. “It is good. I see many great warriors standing before me. I know you are brave. I believe you will do big things. You must try hard to help the Great Chief drive away our enemies. I believe Achawi will be a good war leader. He is very brave. Now, my brothers, Da-yo-ho-go will ask Ha-wen-ne-yu and the Good Spirits to help you.”

The Medicine Man called for an ember, and a young lad brought one from a small fire before one of the lodges. Da-yo-ho-go lighted the medicine pipe. He puffed smoke toward the sky. Then he raised the stem of the pipe.

“Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, smoke this sacred pipe, and feel good toward us,” he cried. “You see many brave warriors standing here. They are about to go on the war trail. Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, take pity on them. Make them

strong and brave. Make them sharp enough to overcome their enemies. Help them to do what they set out to do. Bring them back to their people."

He lowered the pipe, and pointed the stem toward the ground.

"Great Underground People, smoke this sacred pipe and feel good toward us," he said. "Pretty soon you will hear the feet of many warriors. They are our brothers, the Mohawks. They are going to fight our enemies. Great Underground People, help our brothers. Make them strong and brave. Listen for the steps of our enemies, and tell our brothers about it."

Then he extended the pipe toward the east, the south, the west and the north.

"Great Wind Makers, smoke this sacred pipe and feel good toward us," he said. "These brave warriors are about to set out on the war trail. Watch over them. Blow away the danger. Bring them warning of our enemies."

Da-yo-ho-go turned toward the warriors. For some moments he studied them in silence. Then he puffed smoke toward them.

"My brothers, the smoke from this sacred Medicine Pipe will make you strong to fight

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your enemies," he told them. "I talked against the thing you are setting out to do. I tried to make you give it up. Now I see that you are going ahead with it. Well, I will not talk any more against it. You are my brothers. I must help you."

When Da-yo-ho-go finished speaking, Kichkinet turned to Jim.

"Achawi, you are the leader, you must give my people some words," he said.

"My friends, we are about to go to help the Great Chief," Jim told the Mohawks. "It is good. I believe your brothers will do big things. You must keep thinking about them. You must ask Ha-wen-ne-yu to help us."

A few moments afterward the war party marched away. Many warriors were left behind to guard the camp. Men, women and children assembled at the edge of the village, singing the war songs and shouting encouragement. When they had crossed the clearing about the camp, and reached the edge of the woods, the warriors halted and raised their voices in the ringing war cry of their nation. It echoed defiantly through the wilderness, and threw the camp into an uproar. Then the war party disappeared into the forest.

"Kichkinet, you know the way, you must lead

us," Jim told the Mohawk. "How far off is the Carrying Place?"

"Four day's travel," said Kichkinet.

At sunset they stopped for the night beside a little stream that flowed through a dense grove of massive hemlocks. As they were within their own hunting grounds they had little fear of foes, and they lighted several fires and broiled the game which they had killed during the day. Then the stern Mohawk warriors relaxed and became as jolly and carefree as boys. They talked, and joked, and sang their war songs until far into the night.

"My brothers have light hearts," Kichkinet told Jim. "It is good."

The following day they became more cautious. They were advancing toward the north, and they realized that there was a possibility of encountering French scouting parties. Warned of the peril, Jim sent scouts through the woods to guard against blundering into an ambush. Toward the end of the day Little Bear returned from the north, and talked excitedly with Kichkinet. The Mohawks listened soberly. When Little Bear finished his story, Kichkinet turned to Jim.

"Achawi, Little Bear and his brother, Black Cloud, have found our enemies," he said.

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Jim exclaimed in surprise.

"Tell me about it," he said, eagerly.

"Little Bear and Black Cloud were traveling along the top of a ridge, and they heard some people talking below them. They hid in the bushes and waited a long time. When those people passed on, our brothers went down the ridge, and found many tracks. They were leading the same way we are going. Little Bear and Black Cloud set out to follow them. Pretty soon they heard those people again. They were talking, and laughing and making a great noise. Our brothers circled around and got ahead of them. Then they hid in the bushes and watched. Pretty soon they heard those people coming toward them. Then they saw them. They were Shawnees. They were painted for war. There were many warriors. Then Little Bear and Black Cloud came back to tell us about it."

"It is bad—we must watch out," declared Jim.

That night he assembled the Mohawks for a council. They appeared considerably disturbed by the discovery of the Shawnees.

"My brothers, you have heard the words of Little Bear," Jim told them. "Our enemies, the Shawnees, are close by. I believe they are going to help the French. We must be cautious.

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Stands Alone, you are a great war leader, tell me how you feel about this thing."

"Achawi, those Shawnees are going the same way we are going; they are far from their village; it looks bad," declared Stands Alone. "I believe what you say is true. I believe they are going to help the French."

"It is a great war party," said Black Cloud.

"My brothers, we have set out to fight our enemies; now we have found them. Come, we will go and drive them back to their village," a young warrior proposed, impulsively.

"No," said Jim. "We have set out to help the Great Chief. We must go ahead until we find him. If we go to fight the Shawnees, some of you may be killed. Then the Great Chief will say, 'Achawi is foolish. He was leading many brave warriors to help me, but he left some of them behind.' My brothers, we must keep ourselves strong to help the Great Chief."

"The words of Achawi are good," declared Dancing Wolf. "He is the leader. We will do as he tells us to do."

"Perhaps the Shawnees will come over here and find us," said Yellow Eagle.

"Then we will show them how to fight," laughed Jim.

"It is good," cried the Mohawks.

CHAPTER XVIII

A CAUTIOUS ADVANCE

THE night passed without incident, and at dawn Jim and the Mohawks resumed their way through the wilderness. Alert to the peril of colliding with the Shawnees, Jim sent Stands Alone and Little Bear and Black Cloud toward the west to watch their enemies.

"Stands Alone will find out about them," Kichkinet said, confidently.

"Good," replied Jim.

Later in the day, as they were moving cautiously along an open valley between high wooded hills, they suddenly heard the call of the great horned owl. It sounded from the ridge to the southward, and they immediately stopped to listen. In a few moments the call was repeated. Then, after a short interval, they heard it again.

"It is the call of my people; it is mysterious," Kichkinet told Jim.

The Mohawks were suspicious of the signal. Their scouts had gone toward the north, and

as the call had sounded in the south they felt quite certain that it had not come from Stands Alone and his companions.

"Who can it be?" Jim asked, curiously.

"I believe it is a trick," Dancing Wolf said, uneasily. "Perhaps the Shawnees are trying to lead us into a trap."

The Mohawks nodded solemnly.

"We must watch sharp," cautioned Yellow Eagle.

At that moment the call was repeated. It seemed to come from the top of the ridge. They were confused and alarmed. Had the Shawnees separated, and caught them in a trap?

"My brothers, I do not believe it is the Shawnees," Jim told the Mohawks. "If the Shawnees had come this way, Stands Alone and his brothers would have told us about it. Stands Alone is a great war leader. I do not believe the Shawnees have fooled him. If the Shawnees were on that ridge they would be foolish to let us know about it. They would not make the call of your people. My brothers, I believe some one on that ridge is trying to call us. There is no answer. That call must be for us. Come, Kichkinet, make the answer, and we will see what comes of it."

The Mohawks shook their heads. It was evi-

dent that they disapproved the plan. Kichkinet looked uneasily at Jim. The latter nodded.

"My brother, do as I ask you to do," Jim said, sharply.

"You are the leader, I will listen to your words," agreed Kichkinet.

He replied to the signal. Three times he imitated the deep, solemn notes of the horned owl. Then they waited anxiously. At last an answer sounded half way down the ridge. It was not repeated. The Mohawks appeared surprised.

"That tells us that whoever made that call is coming here," said Kichkinet. "Only our people know about that call. I do not know what to make of it."

"It is mysterious," declared the Mohawks.

"See, see, there is some one moving through the woods at the bottom of the hill!" cried Yellow Eagle, as he pointed excitedly toward the ridge.

"Watch out," cautioned Jim.

They saw a figure passing swiftly between the trees. A few moments afterward a man appeared at the base of the hill. He was dressed in buckskins, and appeared to be a white man. He looked toward them and waved

his cap. Then Jim suddenly recognized him.

"It is Dan Holcombe!" he cried, excitedly.

Kichkinet told the Mohawks, most of whom had already recognized the white man.

"The words of Achawi have come true; he is a good leader," they said.

"Well, Jim, I thought you an' your Injuns were goin' to run away from me," Holcombe laughed, as he joined them. "However, it's well to be cautious."

"Dan, I certainly am glad to see you," Jim said, heartily. "How did you find us?"

"This is a bad place for talkin'," Holcombe told him, as he glanced uneasily about the exposed valley.

"You are right," agreed Jim.

They moved into the timber, and stopped beside a little spring to talk. The Mohawks gathered about them, and Kichkinet translated the words of the scout.

"The Colonel sent me out to look for you," Holcombe told Jim. "Most of the troops have moved up to the great lake, an' the Colonel wants you to go there. I knowed the Mohawks traveled along this valley, an' I figured I might head you off by comin' here."

"Has the advance against Crown Point been begun?" Jim asked, anxiously.

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"Not yet," Holcombe told him. "You'll have a chance to take a hand in it. The Colonel wants us to find out how things stand at the French fort."

"Good," said Jim.

Holcombe smiled at Jim's enthusiasm.

"Dan, have you seen the Shawnees?" Jim asked him.

"Are those rascals about?"

"Yes; our scouts discovered a big war party some distance to the northward. They appear to be moving toward the Carrying Place."

"That's bad," declared Holcombe. "However, they'll turn off before they come near the end of the lake. It's likely they're on their way to join the French at Ticonderoga."

While they were talking, Stands Alone and his companions returned. As Holcombe was familiar with the Mohawk tongue he translated their words for Jim.

"Stands Alone says he found the Shawnees," he said. "They have turned off toward the north. It's what I expected to hear. They're goin' to the French fort. Stands Alone says it's a great war party. He says three Shawnees for every Mohawk. Jim, with the Hurons, an' Ojibwas, an' Shawnees scoutin' for the French, an' the Mohawks helpin' us, the woods

will be as full of Injuns as of trees. We'll have to look sharp to keep our hair."

"That we will, Dan," laughed Jim.

The following day they advanced into a rough, mountainous country, and Holcombe said they were approaching the great lake of which he had spoken. At midday they saw it from the top of a ridge. Jim was astonished at its size. It nestled between great pine clad mountains, and stretched away for many leagues toward the north.

"What a splendid body of water," Jim cried, enthusiastically. "Has it been named?"

"Colonel Johnson has named it Lake George, in honor of the king," Holcombe told him.

At the close of the day they arrived at the end of the lake, and found a great force of provincial militiamen encamped along the shore. They had made a wide clearing in the heavy forest, and erected their tents among the stumps of the fallen trees. The latter had been piled around the borders of the camp to form a breastwork. Jim saw at once that the troops with Colonel Johnson far outnumbered those who had accompanied General Braddock, and it filled him with hope for the success of the expedition.

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"I believe we shall have better luck this time," he told Holcombe.

"For sartin," declared the scout.

They were told that Colonel Johnson was at his headquarters at the other end of the camp, and they left the Mohawks in charge of Stands Alone, and went to report. A sentry halted them before the tent.

"Tell Colonel Johnson that Lieutenant Mason has come to report," said Jim.

Dan Holcombe turned to him in surprise.

"Well, bless my body, Jim, I never heard about it," he cried. "Why didn't you tell me you'd been promoted? Here I've been talkin' familiar like, an' callin' you Jim, an' you an officer an' likely to report me to the Colonel for disrespect."

"Never fear, Dan," Jim assured him. "We are fellow scouts."

"But Lieu—"

"Jim!" cried Jim.

"All right, Jim, my boy," laughed Holcombe. "An', do you know, lad, I'm powerful glad you feel that way about it."

"Lieutenant Mason, Colonel Johnson awaits you," said the sentry.

They found Colonel Johnson and Lieutenant Gordon examining a map which they had

spread across the top of an empty powder keg. Both of them wore buckskins.

"Lieutenant Mason, I see that Dan Holcombe has found you," said Colonel Johnson. "Have you brought the Mohawks?"

"Seventy-five warriors have responded to your call," Jim told him.

"Do you hear that, Gordon?" Colonel Johnson cried, gayly. "I knew they would not fail us. We shall find much for them to do. But tell me, Lieutenant Mason, have you heard or seen anything of our enemies?"

"Our scouts discovered a large war party of Shawnees," Jim told him. "They appear to have gone toward the French fort."

Colonel Johnson glanced at his aide. Lieutenant Gordon nodded.

"The French will fill the woods with their Indians," he said.

"Lieutenant Mason, I have an important task awaiting you," said Colonel Johnson. "However, at the moment my plan is not completed. If you will return within the hour, I shall be prepared to give you instructions."

"Very good, sir," replied Jim.

The scouts left Colonel Johnson and walked slowly through the camp. Jim was greatly impressed by the strength and character of the

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troops that had been mobilized for the advance upon Crown Point. The entire force was composed of provincial militia. They presented a far different appearance than the spick and span English regulars and the blue coated Virginians whom Jim had seen in Virginia. Few of them were provided with uniforms, and many were dressed in buckskins. Several of the New England regiments were composed entirely of backwoodsmen, and Jim felt confident that they were fully competent to meet the crafty Canadians and their Indians.

"If we had only had such men in Virginia," he said, sadly.

Holcombe nodded.

"It takes woodsmen to understand Injun fightin'," he said.

Jim had an opportunity to make a thorough inspection of the camp before it was time to report to Colonel Johnson. It was located on a flat stretch of rocky ground at the extreme southern end of the lake. On one side it was bordered by a heavy pine forest; on another by a marsh; and on the third by a low wooded hill. The lake formed a barrier along the front of the camp. Jim noted that several cannons had been placed behind the breastwork of fallen trees. The men had already begun work on a

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log block house, or fort, and it was evident that Colonel Johnson planned to hold the position against further encroachments of the French.

"What a glorious country," Jim told Holcombe.

"Yes, it's nice," agreed Holcombe. "Plenty of water, plenty of woods, plenty of game—an' plenty of Injuns. What more could we ask?"

Jim laughed.

For some moments they stood at the edge of the camp, and looked out over the darkening waters of the lake. It stretched far away into the north, and offered a gateway into the stronghold of the French. A magnificent forest of spruce, and balsam and pine clothed its shores, and above it towered great mountains that cast their gloomy shadows into its placid depths.

"Dan, how long is this great lake?" inquired Jim.

"Almost ten leagues," Holcombe told him. "Then it narrows up an' leads into Champlain."

"That is where we shall meet the French," said Jim.

"Jim, we'll meet 'em before that," declared Holcombe. "They're hustlin' hard to make a fort near the place where this lake enters

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Champlain. The Injuns call it Ticonderoga, an' I believe we'll have to fight to take it. I guess that's the spot the Colonel wants us to watch."

"Perhaps," said Jim.

Soon afterward he went to report to Colonel Johnson. He found him alone in his tent.

"Lieutenant Mason, I am somewhat troubled by news of French activity at the head of the lake," he said. "It is a spot which the Indians have named Ticonderoga. It commands the approach to Champlain, which, as you probably know, is the gateway to the French fort at Crown Point. I have reason for believing that the French plan to erect a fort and make a determined stand at Ticonderoga. I wish to learn if my suspicions are correct. The information can be obtained only by a bold and skillful reconnaissance. For this important work I must have a leader upon whose judgment I may depend. I have chosen you. You are at liberty to select your own company, which will be entirely under your orders and supervision. I desire you to leave on the morrow. Your task will be to obtain complete information concerning the French activities at Ticonderoga. Spare no pains to make your observations accurate and complete. I feel quite certain that the

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French have strong forces of Indians and Canadians scouting along the borders of the lake, and it is probable that you will encounter them. However, I know that you are sufficiently bold and resourceful to overcome them, and fulfill your task with credit."

"Thank you, sir," said Jim. "I shall do my best."

"It is all I ask," Colonel Johnson assured him. "While you are away, I shall employ the Mohawks to search the woods in the vicinity of our camp, for I believe the French may attempt to slip by us and attack the new fort which Colonel Lyman has completed at the Carrying Place."

"Colonel Johnson, may I enlist Dan Holcombe for my company?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"As Chief of Scouts with his Majesty's forces, you may enlist whomsoever you desire," Colonel Johnson told him.

"Then I shall enlist Kichkinet and Dan Holcombe," replied Jim.

"An excellent selection," agreed Colonel Johnson.

Jim soon took his departure, and hastened to find his friends. Darkness had fallen, and the troops were eating at the evening fires. Jim found many old friends among the militia-

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men from Fort Johnson. He had expected to find Holcombe and Kichkinet with them.

"They're probably with the Mohawks," a militiaman told him. "The Injuns have their own fire out there at the edge of the woods."

He saw the fire glimmering brightly between the trees. The Mohawks had been given a side of beef, and they were feasting in high spirits. Kichkinet and Holcombe had joined them. Jim, too, seated himself in the jolly circle about the fire.

"Dan, I have great news for you," he said, enthusiastically. "Colonel Johnson has ordered us to reconnoiter about Ticonderoga."

"I sort of expected it," Holcombe said, quietly.

"Kichkinet, I will ask you to go with us," Jim told the Mohawk.

"It is good," declared Kichkinet.

CHAPTER XIX

A NARROW ESCAPE

AS the lake was a favorite highway for French war parties, Jim and his companions believed it would be perilous to attempt their journey in a canoe. They determined, therefore, to advance cautiously through the woods along the shore.

"It's slower travelin', but it's also safer," declared Holcombe. "Our job is to keep out of sight until we find out what we want to know. If the French or their Injuns get sight of us they're likely to make things interestin'. It's got to be a game of hide and seek, with us doin' most of the hidin'.

"Dan, you are as cautious as an old Fox," laughed Jim.

"In this country, caution makes the hair grow," replied the scout.

They left the camp shortly before sunrise, and began the long, perilous journey into the north. A narrow Indian hunting trail extended through the woods, within bowshot of the water,

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and they followed it. It led through a fragrant forest of spruce and hemlock, where the grim black shadows of the night still lingered beneath the trees. Great clouds of mist rose from the water, and were wafted away on the morning breeze. Fish were feeding, birds called from the edge of the woods, and in a sheltered cove they saw a deer feeding in a patch of lilies. Then the sun rose, and the farther shore of the lake was tinted with gold. The brilliant foliage of birches and maples gave warning that summer was already on the wane. Jim looked about him with keen appreciation. His soul was filled with the silent, brooding peace of the wilderness.

"Dan, with this vast and glorious country at their disposal, it does seem a pity that men cannot live together in peaceful harmony," he said.

"They could, if the French would stay where they belong," Holcombe told him.

Jim nodded thoughtfully.

They continued along the hunting trail until the end of the day, and then as it turned from the water, and led away toward the east, they left it and advanced directly through the woods. At sunset they stopped for the night on a high wooded bluff that offered a splendid view of the

lake. They found the remains of a fire in a little opening between the trees.

"Many days old," said Holcombe.

Kichkinet nodded.

Fearful of making a fire, they ate the jerked venison which they had brought from the camp. Then they watched silently while the day came to an end, and the twilight shadows settled upon the lake. Jim was serious and thoughtful. His mind was filled with thoughts of the approaching encounter with the French. Having witnessed the calamitous defeat of the forces in Virginia, he realized the necessity for a decisive victory over the French at Crown Point. He dreaded to think of the results from another failure. However, the character of the troops and officers with Colonel Johnson gave him confidence. Most of them had been recruited from the isolated backwoods settlements along the frontiers, and he believed that they were far better qualified for wilderness warfare than the troops that had accompanied General Braddock. Jim realized, too, that much might depend upon the thoroughness with which he and his companions performed their task, and he was prepared to risk his life if necessary to obtain the desired information.

"Hi, yi, thar's music," laughed Holcombe,

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as a lynx screamed from the opposite side of the lake.

They listened for some time, but the call was not repeated. They wondered if it had been a signal.

However, as there was no answer, and it had sounded perfectly natural, they finally decided that it was genuine.

"It seemed all right to me," declared Holcombe.

"I heard nothing wrong with it," Jim told him. "Mohawk, do you believe it was a signal?"

"No," replied Kichkinet.

Darkness had fallen, and the night hush had settled upon the wilderness. Then the moon appeared above a mountain on the other side of the lake. As it moved slowly into the sky it blazed a wide silvery trail across the water, and drove the shadows from the edge of the woods. The scouts kept a sharp watch for their foes.

"This is the time they're likely to move along the lake," said Holcombe.

A moment afterward a meteor flashed across the sky, and Kichkinet turned anxiously to his companions.

"It is bad," he declared.

"How so, Mohawk?" Holcombe inquired, curiously.

"It is bad," repeated Kichkinet. "Pretty soon we will see our enemies."

"That's likely enough," laughed Holcombe. "Anyway, it'll be all right if we see 'em first."

They took turns at watching through the night, but saw nothing of their enemies. At sunrise they resumed their way along the lake.

"Now we're gettin' into dangerous country," said Holcombe.

Soon afterward they discovered two canoes moving slowly down the lake. There were three Indians in each canoe. The scouts watched anxiously from the edge of the woods. The canoes passed within easy rifle range, and both Holcombe and Kichkinet recognized the paddlers as Ojibwas.

"Well, Jim, the game of hide an' seek has started, an' so far we're ahead," laughed Holcombe. "But I can't figure why those Injuns are movin' down the lake in daylight. It don't appear like good sense."

"It is mysterious," agreed Kichkinet.

Jim was equally perplexed.

"Thar's only one way to figure it," Holcombe declared, finally. "They don't expect

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to find us so far up the lake. It's likely they think we're keepin' close to the camp."

"Do you believe they know about the camp?" Jim asked him.

"For sartin," replied the scout. "I'll wager their scouts knowed about it as soon as the first tree fell. They're keepin' close watch on things up here."

"Dan, if they feel so sure that we are at the other end of the lake, it should be easy to approach the fort," Jim said, hopefully.

"I'm not so sure of *that*," Holcombe told him.

They advanced with great caution, making frequent visits to the edge of the lake to watch for their foes. The latter, however, failed to appear. At the end of the day Holcombe said that Ticonderoga was less than half a day's journey away. They climbed to the top of a high hill and looked eagerly toward the north. Holcombe pointed out what appeared to be a wide gap in the forest, far away at the end of the lake.

"That's where the French are buildin' their fort," he said.

"Ticonderoga?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"Ticonderoga," replied Holcombe.

"What does it mean," Jim asked the Mohawk.

"Big noise," said Kichkinet.

"It's where the rapids come into the lake," explained Holcombe. "Now, Jim, we're in a risky place, an' we've got to be cautious. We'd best travel by night an' hide by day until we get out of here."

"I agree," said Jim.

"It is good," declared Kichkinet.

They waited until it was dark, and then they advanced along the top of the ridge. They had noted that it continued almost to the end of the lake, and they believed it would afford them a splendid view of the French camp. At dawn, however, they suddenly discovered that the ridge ended abruptly in a steep rocky hillside that dropped sharply to the level of the lake. The camp was hidden by a high wooded hill a rifle shot beyond them.

"We've got to get up thar," said Holcombe.

They descended carefully into the narrow gorge that cut through the ridge, and toiled to the top of the hill. Then they saw the French camp directly below them. It was located beside the lake, on a long narrow strip of land. The clearing was dotted with hundreds of tents, and a great fleet of barges and canoes were

drawn up at the edge of the water. An unfinished fort stood in the center of the clearing. Ramparts of earth and logs had been thrown up on three sides of it. A bugle echoed sharply between the hills, and the notes had barely died away before the troops appeared from the tents. Jim looked upon them in dismay. He saw at once that they far outnumbered the forces with Colonel Johnson. In addition to the troops there was a vast throng of Indians and several companies of Canadians.

"Dan, we must warn Colonel Johnson of this," Jim told Holcombe. "I believe it would be folly to attempt to take this place with the force at his disposal."

Holcombe kept silent. He was staring thoughtfully at the lake. It was a long time before he spoke.

"I've got it," he cried, at last. "Now I know why those Ojibwas went down the lake. They are scouts, goin' to make sure that the way is clear. Don't you see all those barges an' canoes lined up along the shore? Well, think about it. What does it mean? I'll tell you. It means that the French are goin' down the lake to fight Colonel Johnson."

"Dan, you don't—"

"Yes, I do," cried Holcombe. "Thar's not a

minute to spare. We're lucky to find out about it, an' we'll be still luckier to beat 'em to the camp with the news. Once they start down the lake, they'll make us hustle to keep ahead of 'em. Come on, we've got to move."

"Ah, messieurs, do not be in de hurry," laughed a taunting voice behind them.

They turned in alarm, and saw a dark skinned man in buckskins threatening them with his rifle. For a moment they stared at him in speechless amazement. All three of them had recognized him.

"La Valle!" cried Jim.

"Ah, monsieur, you know me, eh?" taunted the half-breed. "Eet ees good. Wen you mak de Mohawks try for keel me, you tink Tor-yoh-ne ees gone, eh? Ah, no, monsieur, Tor-yoh-ne ees too sharp for dat."

Kichkinet moved his hand toward the tomahawk in his belt, and La Valle faced him with threatening eyes.

"Stop!" he cried, warningly, as he aimed his rifle at the Mohawk. "One tam Tor-yoh-ne ees your fren, but you mak heem your enemy. Mak de move, an' I keel. Messieurs, you come way up here for see fine view, eh? Wall, Tor-yoh-ne come up here every day for see dat view. She's gran view, messieurs. Look aroun'. You

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see de beeg lak, you see de big woods, you see de big mountains. Look, messieurs, you will not see dem again."

He raised his voice in a shrill, piercing call that reverberated among the hills. Kichkinet glanced swiftly toward the nearest tree. La Valle anticipated his intentions.

"You mak de jomp, an' I keel your frens," he warned. "Monsieur Ma-son, eet would geeve me de beeg pleasaire to keel you, but I will let de Shawnees do dat."

At that moment Holcombe looked sharply into the woods behind the half-breed, and cried out eagerly.

"Come on boys, you've got him!" he shouted.

It was a wily stratagem, and La Valle was deceived. He flashed about to face the peril, and at that instant Holcombe raised his rifle and fired. La Valle spun around and fell backward into the bushes. Jim and Kichkinet rushed forward and found him lying dead.

"You killed him," Jim said, soberly.

Holcombe nodded. He was hurriedly reloading his rifle. Voices sounded below them on the hillside, and they realized that La Valle's shout had brought his friends. There was not a moment to lose.

"Come," cried Holcombe.

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He turned toward the lake. Then they moved cautiously down the hillside. Some one called directly ahead of them. They stopped and looked at one another in alarm.

"We have been surrounded," said Jim.

"Let 'em pass us," Holcombe told him.

They took shelter behind trees, and waited for their foes to appear. Shouts and signals sounded on all sides of them. Holcombe's shot had aroused the camp. Each moment of delay was perilous. Still they feared to move. Then they saw several Indians approaching cautiously through the timber.

"Shawnees," Kichkinet told Jim.

They passed almost within leaping distance of the concealed scouts. A bedlam of sound came from the top of the hill.

"They've found La Valle; we've got to run," said Holcombe.

They rushed down the hillside. Two Canadians saw them and raised the alarm. A rifle ball passed close above their heads.

"Keep goin'," cried Holcombe. "We'll make for the lake."

CHAPTER XX

THE BATTLE AT LAKE GEORGE

ONCE past their foes, the three scouts turned southward along the shore of the lake. They found an old hunting trail some distance back from the water. As it offered easy traveling, they followed it until it turned off toward the eastern ridges. Then they plunged recklessly into the woods. Shouts and signals sounding through the forest behind them gave warning that their enemies were in hot pursuit.

"We have a good start," Jim said, hopefully.

"Watch out for the lake," Holcombe warned him. "They'll take to the canoes, and try to get ahead of us."

They set an exhausting pace, and Jim feared that Holcombe might give out. It was not long, however, before he learned that the veteran scout was as agile and untiring as his younger companions. When they had gone a league, or more, they slackened their pace. Then, a short distance farther on, they approached the edge

of the water and looked anxiously up the lake.

"Here they come!" cried Holcombe.

Several canoes swept around a long projecting arm of the shore. There were two men in each canoe, and they were paddling desperately.

"Now, we've got to do some *REAL* movin'," cried Holcombe.

They raced away at top speed. Holcombe led, and Jim and Kichkinet followed close behind him. The dense forest was free from undergrowth, and they traveled with little difficulty. It was not long, however, before they learned that the canoes were gaining upon them. The discovery filled them with despair. They had reached the limit of their powers, and were unable to move faster. Then Holcombe suddenly turned toward the east.

"We must get away from the lake," he said.

"It is good," agreed Kichkinet.

Once out of sight of the lake, they neither heard nor saw anything further of their foes. They believed they had eluded them, and the thought gave them hope. At midday they stopped beside a little stream to rest.

"Dan, do you believe the French know who we are?" Jim asked, anxiously.

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"It's likely they'll guess," Holcombe told him.

"Then perhaps they will abandon the idea of advancing against the camp."

Holcombe shook his head.

"Jim, my boy, that's just what they *WON'T* do," he said. "They'll set out at once, hopin' to catch Colonel Johnson before he can get ready for 'em. We've got to keep movin'."

A short time afterward they resumed their way. Each league took them into safer country, and they felt encouraged. They stopped for another short rest at sunset, and then, as they felt quite certain that their foes were behind them, they again turned toward the lake.

"They'll give it up at dark," said Holcombe. "However, the war party will set out long before that. We've got to keep goin' till we reach the camp."

They traveled steadily through the night, and early the following day reached the spot where the hunting trail from the camp turned from the water. Holcombe stopped and looked soberly up the lake. Then he shook his head and laughed.

"Jim, I guess we've beat 'em—so far, anyway," he said.

"It was a hot race," Jim told him.

Holcombe nodded.

"Dan, I believe it might be a good plan to leave Kichkinet here to watch for the French, while we hurry on to warn Colonel Johnson."

"I was just thinkin' about it," replied Holcombe. "It's the thing to do."

"Mohawk, watch here until you see our enemies," Jim told Kichkinet. "Then come fast to tell the Great Chief about it."

"It is good," agreed Kichkinet.

A few moments later Jim and Holcombe hastened away. Toward sunset they arrived at the camp. They passed the sentries, and went directly to the headquarters of Colonel Johnson. They found him with several other officers. He looked up anxiously as they entered the tent.

"Where is Kichkinet?" he asked, quickly.

"He is watching at the spot where the trail leaves the lake," Jim explained.

"Are our enemies approaching?" Colonel Johnson asked, in amazement.

"I fear so, sir," replied Jim. "We found the French camp filled with troops and Indians. Their force is vastly superior to our own. The fort is unfinished, but it is protected by strong ramparts. A great fleet of barges and canoes were drawn up along the shore. Dan Hol-

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combe believes that the French were preparing to move down the lake to attack you. The day previous we saw two canoes containing six Ojibwas. Their appearance on the open lake in daylight perplexed us. Holcombe believes they were scouts, sent out in advance of the war party.” —

“Did you see the French actually embark?”

“No,” said Jim. “While we were watching from the top of a hill we were suddenly surprised by Tor-yoh-ne—”

“Tor-yoh-ne!” cried Colonel Johnson.

Jim nodded.

“Colonel Johnson, but for the sharpness of Dan Holcombe, I fear we would have met a miserable death at the torture stake of the Shawnees. I prefer that Holcombe shall tell you about it.”

“Speak, Dan,” Colonel Johnson said, eagerly.

“Colonel, thar’s not much to tell,” the scout said, modestly. “We were watchin’ thar on that hill, an’ then La Valle called out behind us. How he got thar, or where he come from, I can’t say. Anyway thar he was, talkin’ sassy an’ pintin’ his rifle at us. He had us in a bad fix, an’ I seen he meant business. The Mohawk tried to pull a trick, but La Valle was too sharp.

Then I fooled him. An'—well it was him or us, an' I shot him."

"Tor-yoh-ne is dead?"

Holcombe nodded.

"It is the fate which he has merited for a long time," declared Colonel Johnson. "I am glad to know that we shall be relieved of his evil influence. It has caused endless misunderstanding and difficulty between the Indians and ourselves."

He turned and spoke briefly with his officers. A moment afterward they left the tent. Then a bugle sounded, and orders echoed through the camp. It was evident that preparations for defense were under way. Jim felt relieved.

"Continue, Lieutenant Mason," said Colonel Johnson.

"Tor-yoh-ne had called to arouse the camp," Jim told him. "We soon heard his friends advancing up the hillside. Then we were forced to run, and they followed us some distance down the lake. That is all, sir."

"Lieutenant Mason, you and your fellow scouts have rendered valuable service, and I highly commend your courage and ability."

"Thank you, sir," replied Jim.

"Now, gentlemen, as both of you show evidences of fatigue, I beg that you will rest from

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your exertions until we have further need of your services. You will find quarters in an unoccupied tent, which the sentry outside will point out to you."

They were shown to a tent close beside the tent of Colonel Johnson. It was provided with cots and blankets, and the wearied scouts soon were sleeping soundly.

In the meantime the camp was prepared for the expected attack from the French. Couriers were sent to summon aid from the troops at the Carrying Place, five leagues away. The men were assembled and assigned to positions. The artillerymen waited beside the cannons. A strong force of sentinels were posted beyond the breastworks, and the Oneidas watched grimly at the border of the lake.

"Now let them come," cried a militiaman. "We'll give them a dose they will be likely to remember."

The night passed without alarm, however, and at daylight the anxiety lessened. Jim and Holcombe were talking with Colonel Johnson at his quarters when they were interrupted by the sentry.

"Colonel, there's a young Mohawk outside, and he wishes to see you," he said. "He comes

from the lake, and says he has important news."

"It is Kichkinet," cried Jim.

"Bring him in," said Colonel Johnson.

Kichkinet entered the tent. He was wet with sweat, and appeared exhausted.

"Speak, my brother," Colonel Johnson told him.

"Great Chief, I bring bad words," he said. "A great French war party has come down the lake. They came ashore up there where the trail turns away. They have set out to follow it. There are many white men and many Indians. I do not know where they are going. I came very fast to tell you about it."

"I fear they are going to attack our fort at the Carrying Place," said Colonel Johnson. "We must turn them back."

"They are very strong," Kichkinet warned him.

Colonel Johnson called the sentry, and dispatched him to bring the officers. They hastened to join him. The scouts attempted to leave, but Colonel Johnson detained them.

"Wait, I may require your services," he told them.

Then he turned to his officers.

"Gentlemen, the Mohawk brings alarming

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information," he said. "The French have come down the lake and disembarked at the turn of the trail. They have followed it into the woods. I fear they are going to attack Fort Edward. We must turn them back. Colonel Williams, I desire that you shall assemble three regiments, and march to intercept our foes. If you require reinforcements, dispatch a courier, and I will send them. In the meantime I shall send couriers to warn Colonel Blanchard at Fort Edward."

Soon afterward Colonel Williams led a thousand militiamen into the wilderness to intercept the French. The troops at the camp cheered enthusiastically at their departure. Kichkinet shook his head.

"It is not enough," he said. "The French have many more warriors."

Within an hour heavy firing in the woods to the eastward of the camp gave warning that Colonel Williams and his force were engaged with the French. The men at the camp listened anxiously. It was not long before the noise of battle sounded considerably nearer. Colonel Johnson and his officers turned to one another with anxious faces.

"They're fallin' back," Dan Holcombe told Jim.

Jim stared at him in alarm. A dreadful possibility flashed through his mind. Had Colonel Williams blundered into another French ambush. He refused to believe it.

"No, no, it cannot be possible," he cried.

"Sounds powerful like it," declared Holcombe.

They listened fearfully. The sound of musketry steadily drew nearer. The camp was thrown into an uproar, as the troops suddenly realized that their companions were retreating before the enemy. Bugles sounded the assembly, officers ran about shouting orders, supplies of ammunition were rushed to the breastworks, as Colonel Johnson made ready to defend himself against the French.

"Let me lead the Mohawks to help our troops," Jim begged him. "They are invaluable in such fighting."

"Go, my brave lad," said Colonel Johnson.

"Come, Kichkinet," Jim cried, gayly.

They rushed from the camp, and joined the Mohawks who were waiting silently at the edge of the woods.

"Give my words to your brothers," Jim told Kichkinet. "Mohawks, we must help our friends. Come, I will lead you."

"It is good," replied Stands Alone.

THE BATTLE AT LAKE GEORGE

Jim hastened toward the sounds of battle. Within half a league they came upon the troops of Colonel Williams. They were fighting desperately to hold off a great throng of French, Canadians and Indians that outnumbered them four to one. The provincial militiamen were fighting cautiously from behind trees, and although forced to give way they were retreating in good order.

“Mohawks, strike your enemies!” shouted Jim.

They charged boldly upon a company of Shawnees that were attempting to get behind the retreating troops. The fierceness of their attack threw the Shawnees into confusion, and before they rallied the militiamen withdrew from their predicament. Slowly, stubbornly, they yielded ground to their foes. Strive as they might, however, the French were unable to throw them into disorder and rout. Aided by the Mohawks, who waged a gallant and effective fight against the Shawnees, the provincial troops continued their slow, cautious retreat toward the camp. When they finally reached the edge of the little clearing they made their stand.

At that moment reinforcements clambered over the breastworks and rushed to assist their

comrades. At the end of a desperate fight the French and their Indians were driven back. The Mohawks followed close behind them, whooping fiercely, and striking terror into the hearts of the French regulars. The latter retreated in disorder, and the provincials seized the opportunity to reach the camp. The Mohawks soon followed them.

They had barely climbed over the breastworks before the French rallied, and rushed furiously to the attack. Led by the white clad French regulars, they exposed themselves with reckless courage, and were almost at the breastworks when the cannons at the edge of the camp halted them with a destructive volley of small shot. Awed by the noise and power of the great guns, the Canadians and Indians gave way and ran toward the woods. The regulars, however, continued the attack. Time after time they charged toward the camp, but each time they were driven back with heavy loss. At last they, too, retreated to the edge of the woods. A mighty cheer rose from the camp.

"Hurrah, we have driven them off!" the troops shouted, joyously.

They aimed the cannons at the edge of the timber, and soon drove the enemy farther into the forest. Then, encouraged by their success,

THE BATTLE AT LAKE GEORGE

the officers led their men over the breastworks, and advanced boldly upon their foes. Led by the Mohawks, they charged into the woods, and drove the French before them. The retreat soon became a rout, and French, Canadians and Shawnees fled wildly through the wilderness with the Mohawks and provincial troops in close pursuit. They won a decisive victory, and returned to the camp with many prisoners, including General Dieskau, the commander of the French forces.

When darkness finally settled upon the lake the camp resounded with the joyous celebration of victory. A great fire was lighted, and the Mohawks danced wildly about it, singing their boastful war songs and filling the woods with the fierce war cry of their nation. The white men gathered about them, and cheered wildly. Then Colonel Johnson sent for Jim.

“Lieutenant Mason, you are a brave scout and a gallant officer,” declared Colonel Johnson. “I desire to thank you for your timely and valuable assistance. But for you and your Mohawks I fear the troops beyond the camp might have been surrounded and destroyed. I have received a full account of the action. Both officers and men give you high praise.”

JIM MASON, SCOUT

"I have tried to do my duty, sir," Jim told him.

"You have succeeded nobly," replied Colonel Johnson. "My only regret is that I shall be compelled to postpone a further advance against Crown Point until I receive the necessary reinforcements to assure the success of the expedition. In the meantime I shall build a strong fort here, and leave a garrison to maintain our supremacy at this end of the lake. Our people will feel greatly encouraged at our victory. With sufficient men, I believe we shall be equally successful at Crown Point."

"I feel sure of it, sir," Jim declared, confidently.

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THE END

11-12-88











